

“The revels we shared in the days that are gone”:
Examining female participation in the cult of Dionysos in ancient Greece and Rome.

By
Jenna Colclough

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Classics

Acadia University

April, 2017

©Copyright by Jenna M. Colclough, 2017

This thesis by Jenna M. Colclough
is accepted in its present form by the
Department of History and Classics
as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honours

Approved by the Thesis Supervisor

Dr. Vernon Provençal

Date

Approved by the Head of the Department

Dr. Gillian Poulter

Date

Approved by the Honours Committee

Dr. Jun Yang

Date

I, Jenna M. Colclough, grant permission to the University Librarian at Acadia University to reproduce, loan or distribute copies of my thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats on a non-profit basis. I, however, retain the copyright in my thesis.

Signature of Author

Date

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to Shelley Colclough, for her unwavering support and encouragement.

First and foremost, I should like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Provençal, for his thorough instruction and ‘rigorous’ championing of my work.

I should also like to thank Dr. Hewitt for her guidance and encouragement throughout.

Thank you both so much.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the R. Howard Webster Foundation for helping fund this project and allowing me to develop my thesis to the best of my ability.

Ad altiora tendo.

Table of Contents

Title Page	
Approval Page	iii
Permission for Duplication Page	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Table of Contents	ix
Figures List	x
Abstract	xi
Chapter 1: Origins of the Greek Dionysos and his female retinue in Dionysian mythology and Euripides' <i>Bacchae</i>	1
Chapter 2: Historic Mentions and Archaeological Depictions of Female Bacchantes	25
Chapter 3: Roman Bacchus: Scandal and Apprehension	55
Conclusion	83
Appendices	85
Bibliography	103

Illustrations

Appendix A François Vase

Appendix B Red-Figure Cup by Douris Painter

Appendix C Marble frieze

Appendix D Red-figure wine-mixing bowl

Appendix E Red-figure Drinking Cup

Appendix F 'Maenad' Stamnos

Appendix G Attic red-figure volute krater by the Pronomos Painter

Appendix H Plan of Room 5 of the Villa of the Mysteries

Appendix I Child's coffin decorated with bacchic procession

Abstract

This investigation uncovers the function of women and femininity in the cult of Dionysos in ancient Greece and Rome with a particular interest in the agency women derived from cult participation. This is achieved through the analysis of popular myths, Euripides' *Bacchae*, epigraphic and historical sources juxtaposed with archaeological sources and scholarly analysis. Sources are presented chronologically to provide a clear and comprehensive view of the evolution of Dionysian cult.

Chapter 1 explores the origins of Dionysos and his female retinue in Dionysian mythology and their presentation in Euripides' fifth century BCE drama. The focus Euripides places on women in *Bacchae* emphasizes the prominence of women in the cult while his exploration of Dionysos and femininity establishes Dionysos as a defender of the feminine principle. *Bacchae* is further examined as a historical source in Chapter 2 for its function as an act of reception for Dionysian cult in the Classical period.

Chapter 2 examines female cult participation in Classical and Hellenistic Greece using historical sources and epigraphic evidence. The earliest epigraphic evidence of female bacchantes originates in Hellenistic Magnesia and Miletus. In general, women benefitted from greater access to the public sphere in the post-Classical period. Historic sources and Hellenistic inscriptions illustrate the positions of authority maintained by women in Dionysian cult and their participation in the public sphere. It was through participation in Dionysian ritual that women could engage in public life and still maintain the respectability afforded them by seclusion.

As Dionysian cult entered Rome through Southern Italy, a Romanization of the Greek cult imposed cult hierarchy and strict regulations. These modifications are examined in Chapter 3, along with the decline of female participation in the Roman

Bacchic cult due to the hierarchical nature of Roman society. In sum, this thesis maintains that the cult of Dionysos facilitated the participation of women in the public sphere through ritual activity, and granted them public privileges without compromising the ideal of seclusion in Greek society. The hierarchical nature of Roman society necessitated the modification of a cult which boasted gender-mixing and a diverse membership. Due to the hierarchic nature of Roman society centred around the principle of the *paterfamilias*, female participation declined in the Imperial period.

Chapter 1: Origins of the Greek Dionysos and his female retinue in Dionysian mythology and Euripides' *Bacchae*.

Introduction

The Greek god Dionysos is characterized in myth by his associations with wine, liberation, destruction, and his ecstatic female following. Chapter 1 studies the role of women in Dionysian myth as well as Euripides' *Bacchae* to establish the connection between the feminine and the Dionysian.

"Ancient Origins" examines Nilsson's assessment of the Thracian cult of Dionysos from which the ecstatic nature of the Greek cult is derived.¹ It is through the ecstatic Thracian cult that *maenadism* was introduced to the Greek mainland. Maenadism was a practice characterized by ecstatic dances and a madness imposed by Dionysos which was exhibited by the cult's female following. Through ecstatic worship, female bacchantes felt what they attributed to the immediate presence of the divine. The emphatic presence of the god is further examined through myths of his double-birth, and his association with theomachy exhibited in "Hymn 1" of the *Homeric Hymns*, and Homer's *Iliad* respectively. These historic and literary renderings of Dionysos provide an introduction to the experiences of women in Dionysian cult and demonstrate the cult's age and influence.

"*Bacchae*: A Study in Femininity," examines aspects of historic maenadic practice exhibited in Euripides' *Bacchae*, a fifth century BCE drama depicting the god's vengeance on Thebes. In *Bacchae*, Dionysos enchants the Theban women to leave the

¹ Park McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos: Method in the Study of a God* (Hague: Mouton, 1978), 113.

city and participate in maenadism. Femininity is repeatedly addressed by the hero Pentheus as he describes Dionysos as ‘effeminate’ and ‘beautiful.’² According to Seaford, the spotlight Euripides placed on women and femininity in the cult demonstrates the significance of gender in the worship of Dionysos.³ Euripides presents femininity as an integral aspect of Dionysian divinity and Dionysos as not only aligned with the female principle, but capable of defending it.

“Dionysos and the Patriarchy” further examines Euripides’ *Bacchae* and the separation of women from the *polis* therein, which closely resembles the isolated independence of Artemis and her mythic female followers.⁴ When the bacchantes take to the woods, their return to nature draws on some aspects of the Mother Goddess present in Dionysian cult. For Harrison, the role of maenads as nurses tending the infant Dionysos (*Dionysos Liknites*) represented a transition from an earlier matriarchal society, in which Dionysos was conceived as the ‘son of his mother.’⁵ The second birth of Dionysos from the thigh of Zeus, according to Harrison, is demonstrative of a transition to a patriarchal society, in which Dionysos is conceived of as the ‘son of his father.’⁶ While her work in *Prolegomena* has been criticized for its theoretical nature rooted in sociology,⁷ Harrison’s analysis of *Bacchae* in *Prolegomena* remains of interest insofar as it examines the gender

² Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays* trans. Reginald Gibbons and Charles Segal (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 805-858, 270-272.

³ Richard Seaford, *Dionysos, Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World* (London: Routledge, 2007), 36-7.

⁴ François Lissarrague, “On the Wildness of Satyrs,” in *Masks of Dionysus*, ed. Thomas H. Carpenter and Christopher A. Faraone (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 122.

⁵ Jane E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), 402-3.

⁶ Harrison, *Prolegomena*, 402-3.

⁷ McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos: Method in the Study of a God*, 93.

dynamics addressed by Dionysian mythology and the possibility that Dionysos is linked to an older matriarchal tradition.

“Distinguishing Myth from Historic Practice” places Euripides’ *Bacchae* in historical context and begins with Seaford’s assessment that because *Bacchae* itself serves as an aetiology of the cult of Dionysos in Thebes, it is therefore pervaded by ritual.⁸ Drawing from vase paintings as well as literary sources, Seaford concludes that there is no doubt that maenadism was practiced in reality and that various elements of ritual in Euripides likely took place on a smaller scale in cult activity.⁹ Seaford’s analysis justifies *Bacchae* as a historical source and utilizes material culture evidence to demonstrate the reality of maenadism.

The maenadic practices reflected in *Bacchae* are addressed in “Sexuality and Euripides.” This section compares the etymologies set forth by Dodds and Evans of the word *orgia* as it appears in *Bacchae*— a word typically used in the rites of Demeter and Dionysos.¹⁰ Dodds’ forensic approach traces the term to *ergon*, or “deed,” and the phrase as it relates to cult practice as “things done.” Evans argues that the word was derived from *organ*, “to be aroused,” “run riot,” or “to be in heat.”¹¹ Each etymology provides a different view of the maenads and the characterization of their worship in *Bacchae*.

“Revisiting Matriarchy” addresses Euripides’ references to Kybele, Rhea, and Demeter which suggest an association between Dionysos and cults of the Mother Goddess. Harrison’s view that Dionysian myth exhibited a shift from matriarchal to

⁸ Richard Seaford, *Euripides' Bacchae: With an Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1996), 35.

⁹ Ibid, 36-7.

¹⁰ Arthur Evans, *The God of Ecstasy: Sex-roles and the Madness of Dionysos* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988), 69.

¹¹ Ibid, 70.

patriarchal society was criticized for its lack of historical context. Evans' scholarship provides this context. The association of Dionysos and Demeter presented in *Bacchae* is examined through the comparison of Harrison's sociological approach with Evans' analysis of Mother Goddess cults as the earliest form of religion in the Mediterranean. The shared life-giving qualities of Dionysos and Demeter are explored through myth, *Bacchae*, and the Skiereia fertility festival. These common qualities establish Dionysos as the defender of the female principle both in *Bacchae* and through historic ties to the Mother Goddess cults.

Women permeate Dionysian mythology and reflect an image of women engaged in cult practice. The feminine aspect of the god is manifested in *Bacchae*, as well as the *Homeric Hymns*. As the god of division and duality draws out the repressed emotions of Pentheus in *Bacchae*, so is Dionysos the liberator of repressed emotion in women. Overall, analysis of Dionysian myth and Euripides' *Bacchae* presents an image of Dionysian cult in which women are celebrated in celebrating the god.

Ancient Origins

Although Dionysos is recognized as the son of Zeus in mythology, a foreign aspect to his divinity is manifested in several myths which portray Dionysos revealing himself to the Greek people in the defence of his divine status. This foreign aspect is addressed by Herodotus, who claimed that Dionysos was among the last of the Olympian gods to have been received by the Greek world;¹² however, archeological evidence suggests the deity is as old as any of his fellow Olympians. Linear B tablets discovered at

¹² Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 2.145.

Pylos and Chania, Crete demonstrate that Dionysos was known to the Greeks as early as the thirteenth century BCE. The name Dionysos is inscribed on these tablets, although it is unclear whether this evidence links the god with viticulture, with which Dionysos was associated from the seventh century and throughout Graeco-Roman antiquity.¹³

In his study of the origins of Dionysian cult, Nilsson isolates a pattern of belief in Minoan religion related to the natural, vegetative aspect of the wine god's divinity. This cult can be traced to Asia Minor and is therefore to be considered separate from the Thracian 'ecstatic' cult.¹⁴ These two aspects of the cult of Dionysos were reconciled at some point in prehistoric Greece. The ecstatic cult of the Thracians illustrates some of the more characteristic aspects of Dionysian cult. Images from literary and artistic sources of female followers dancing and calling out as well as group participation in orgies and dancing are derived from this Thracian cult. Due to a substantial Thracian migration to Lydia, the Thracian cult mixed with the more moderate interpretation of the Lydians and years of acculturation resulted in another variation of the cult. The Lydians introduced to these frenzied practices the element of rebirth, adding the celebration of annual death and revivification of nature, with Dionysos as the Divine Child caught in the natural cycle of the seasons.¹⁵ The earthly aspect of Dionysos introduced in Lydia is reflected in the Egyptian association of Dionysos with Osiris, the fertility god of the Nile who had been

¹³ Seaford, *Dionysos*, 15-6.

¹⁴ McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos: Method in the Study of a God*, 113.

¹⁵ Ibid.

revived by his wife, Isis.¹⁶ Herodotus explicitly identifies the Egyptians as the source for Greek knowledge about Dionysos and identifies Osiris as his Egyptian counterpart.¹⁷

Believed by Nilsson to have been imported into Greece through Thrace,¹⁸ some scholars identify the cult of Dionysos as a testament to the frenzy brought on by group ritual. According to Harrison in *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, the origins of Dionysian cult were fairly primitive and centred around participatory ritual activity which imposed a frenzied group-mentality on its participants. Feeling suddenly overcome with uncontrollable emotion, the bacchants attributed the swell of emotion to a third party, Dionysos, as they were unable to conceive of this change as a psychological phenomena. In this psychological view, the cult which the Greeks received from the Thracians was a primitive one, rooted in the ecstatic group experience. According to Harrison, additional personality traits and associations of the god, such as his affiliation with viticulture, were attributed to Dionysos in a later stage of religious development.¹⁹ Throughout its history the cult of Dionysos maintained a deep association with divine interaction and *ekstasis* (to stand outside oneself). Through ecstatic worship, the god's followers felt what they attributed to the immediate presence of the divine.

This divine presence brought on by bacchic ritual came to be conveyed in artwork and theatrical performance through mask imagery. These masks, which appeared in vase artwork, temples, theatre, and later Roman fresco all served to demonstrate Dionysian

¹⁶ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 3. 21-23.

¹⁷ Herodotus, *The Histories*, 2.42.

¹⁸ Martin P. Nilsson, *Geschichte*, cf. McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos: Method in the Study of a God*, 113.

¹⁹ Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, 168-9. Harrison uses various examples from Greek mythology to demonstrate the personification of emotion in primitive religion throughout this chapter.

duality. While the gods of Greek mythology were believed to reside on Mount Olympus, or in other distant and isolated locales, Dionysos was thought to have maintained a much more direct dwelling amongst his followers. Perhaps due in part to his bacchants' attribution of their shared craze to the presence of the god, the mask came to symbolize this presence and simultaneous absence. When in the presence of Dionysos, the frenzy the god inspired constituted a loss of identity, as the imposed madness transformed the women into maenads through divine intervention. Although unseen, his presence is made clear by intoxication, whether by wine or the emotional highs of group ritual. The mask itself serves as a lasting testimony to the god's presence among humankind.²⁰ Henrichs notes in his study of the "Human and Divine in Dionysus" that Dionysos is found primarily in the abstract: 'Throughout antiquity, to accept Dionysus was tantamount to being in the presence of the god, whether by a stretch of the imagination or by a leap of faith.'²¹ Dionysos is present in a sense unique to his divinity and this is demonstrated through artistic renderings such as the François Vase (Appendix A). This black-figure Attic krater from the 6th century BCE depicts several scenes from mythology in registers, though notably, the gods bearing gifts at the wedding of Thetis and Peleus. Here the wine god appears in stride amongst other divinities, though unlike the rest he faces the observer directly. He bears a wine vessel overhead and his wide eyes appear almost crazed amidst the relatively calm register. This image highlights beautifully the nature of Dionysos as the god of confrontation. As the masks suggest, Dionysos was both a member of the

²⁰ Walter Otto, *Dionysus, Myth and Cult*, trans. Robert Palmer (Dallas: Indiana University Press, 1989), 86-91. Otto devotes this brief chapter to the significance of the mask in Dionysian cult, drawing connections to other masks used in antiquity, as well as modern limitations in approaching this phenomenon.

²¹ Albert Henrichs, "Human and Divine in Dionysus," in *Masks of Dionysus*, ed. Thomas H. Carpenter and Christopher A. Faraone (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 40.

Olympic order and the mortal world; he was present amongst the gods, yet aware of his audience and an active participant in both spheres of existence.

His dual position in both the mortal and divine realms takes form in myth through multiple accounts of his birth. According to “Hymn I” of the *Homeric Hymns*, Dionysos was born to mortal Semele of Thebes by Zeus.²² Pseudo-Apollodorus describes how the maiden was tricked by jealous Hera into asking the god to appear to her ‘as he would appear to Hera,’ and upon seeing his divine form she was destroyed. Zeus then retrieved the child and sewed it into his thigh to protect the babe from wrathful Hera. Dionysos thence became known as the ‘insewn god,’ born a second time as a deity, though still bound to the mortal world.²³

The presence of Dionysos in both the mortal and divine spheres represents one of many dualities which comprise the nature of his divinity. Dionysos was at once perceived as the harbinger of peace as well as destruction. His presence amongst followers was taken for madness and hysteria, though also as a return to the natural world. The *maenads*, or female followers in his troupe, are often depicted adorning the fawn-skin and are crowned with snakes, which Nonnus claims were used to protect the women from the ‘desires of men.’²⁴ This natural element is expressed by the Dionysos *Dendrites*, or rather, the identification of Dionysos as a tree god.²⁵

²² Homer, *The Homeric Hymns*, ed. Michael Crude (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3.

²³ Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology*, ed. Robin Hard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 101. See also: Homer and Michael Crude. *The Homeric Hymns*, 3.

²⁴ Nonnos, *Dionysiaca*, trans. W. H. D. Rose (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 14.363, 15.80.

²⁵ Otto, *Dionysus, Myth and Cult*, 157.

Dionysian mythology is largely set in nature and he is presented as an effeminate male traversing the forests alongside his troop of maenads and satyrs. The satyrs, half-man and half-goat, are known in myth for their comic lack of self-restraint. They are often depicted as intoxicated and in pursuit of maenads— for this reason, satyrs appear to be the perfect entourage for the god of wine and unbridled ecstasy. In the atmosphere of Dionysos, where the madness imposed by the god blurs the boundaries between social and conceptual roles, it is fitting that his entourage includes a cross between the human and the animalistic, overcome with both passion and enthusiasm.²⁶

The satyrs prove that the god of wine, a gift given to humankind which ‘erases all our troubles,’²⁷ can provide destruction if not pleasure. According to Aristotle, the improvised ‘Satyr Plays,’ involving bawdy, sexual acts performed by men in costume, eventually produced the comedic genre and continued to be performed in his own time.²⁸ Several of the earliest depictions of satyrs in vase paintings clearly show the creatures as human men draped in furry costumes and demonstrate how mythic images were expressed through ritual and entertainment.²⁹

It is from this well-received improvisation that drama was created and at the heart of every tragic act of hubris onstage, Dionysos watches it all come down. For example, while Homer neglects to devote attention to Dionysos as he does for many other Olympians, Dionysos is mentioned by Glaucus and Diomedes in the *Iliad*, as they discuss their own mortality. They describe Lycurgos, who had frightened Dionysos as a child,

²⁶ François Lissarrague, “On the Wildness of Satyrs,” in *Masks of Dionysus*, 207.

²⁷ Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays*, 805-858, 270-272.

²⁸ Aristotle, *Aristotle: Poetics*, trans. Gerald F. Else (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 1449a.

²⁹ Sheila McNally, “The Maenad in Early Greek Art,” *Arethusa* 11 (1978): 108, fig. 1, 112, fig. 4.

which in turn caused the young god to seek refuge with Thetis.³⁰ It becomes clear in this, the earliest literary reference to Dionysos, that the theme of theomachy is central to the god's divinity. It is this conflict with the gods and therefore with one's misconceived understanding of their place in the cosmological order, that provides the dramatic fall from grace central to Greek tragedy.

Bacchae: A Study in Femininity

Perhaps the most renowned literary source in the scholarship of Dionysos is Euripides' *Bacchae*. Writing in the 5th century BCE, Euripides wrote some 90 plays for the Great Dionysia, of which only 19 survive.³¹ In *Bacchae*, the sceptic Pentheus denies the existence of the god and states openly that he wishes to pursue the female bacchants who have already departed from the city to worship the god on Mount Kitháiron. He believes that the women are clearly engaged in 'inappropriate' amorous activities and that hunting down these women and bringing them back to the city is for the sake of public order. The women in this narrative, having recognized Dionysos as a god, have been seduced by the god at the expense of Thebes. According to Euripides, Dionysos was born by the mortal Semele, daughter of Cadmus of Thebes. Although she had been impregnated by Zeus, this claim was refuted by her jealous sisters, who claimed that Semele had flaunted divine conception in order to defend her reputation. It was for this

³⁰ Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles, ed. Bernard Knox (New York: Viking, 1990), 6.150-160.

³¹ Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, "Euripides," in: eds. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 571.

reason that, in *Bacchae*, Zeus killed Semele with a lightening bolt upon their son's birth, only to sew the god into his leg and give birth a second time, this time to a divinity.³²

In *Bacchae* Dionysos inspires the women of Thebes to bring about vengeance on his mother's sisters and their faithless city and lays claim to his divinity in the process. In doing so, Dionysos is presenting a challenge to Thebes— without the recognition of his divinity, he will insight revolt. *Bacchae* portrays women in many different roles for their varying associations with the god; from Dionysos avenging the death of his mother, to the mother of troubled Pentheus, who will eventually murder her own blasphemous son. This gynocentric focus is evident in the very title of Euripides' play, which references the incensed female followers rather than the city's tragic hero. The spotlight Euripides places on women in the cult conveys the significance of gender in the worship of Dionysos. How this predominantly female cult was received by the Greek populace is demonstrated in turn by Pentheus.³³ This reception is illustrated by Charles Segal in his commentary on the destruction of Pentheus' palace in *Bacchae*. According to Segal, Dionysos targeting the palace is an image of his war against the institutions of the city-state.³⁴

It is through this theomachy that the conflicting dualities of Dionysos are best demonstrated. In a fundamental way, wine serves the function of removing barriers by impairing judgement. According to Seaford, this aspect of Dionysian destruction is enacted by Dionysos to challenge Pentheus' blasphemy and subsequent actions against

³² Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays*, 32-43. The second-birth is elaborated by Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology*, ed. Robin Hard, 101 and "Hymn I" of the *Homeric Hymns*.

³³ Seaford, *Dionysos*, 36-7.

³⁴ Charles Segal, *Dionysiac Poetics and Euripides' Bacchae* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 97.

the Theban women. Because Pentheus distanced himself from the Dionysian, he isolated himself from others by refusing the unity offered by the cult.³⁵ Due to the impious city of Thebes, whose warrior in this theomachy is Pentheus, his rejection in particular must be challenged by the divine destruction of Dionysos. Through attaining this goal, Dionysos is able to assert his divinity while also defending the bacchants. In Scene 3, Dionysos draws out Pentheus' sexual curiosity in order to bring about his death at the hands of the Theban bacchants. Through this action, Dionysos is presented as the god of suppressed emotion. As women are understood chiefly in the Classical world as nurturers, the god appears their champion.

The god himself was often referred to as 'effeminate' and 'beautiful' by Pentheus when Dionysos appeared before him in the guise of a male priest.³⁶ Similarly, in Aeschylus the god is referred to as *ὁ γυννίς*, or, "the womanly one."³⁷ In his confrontation with the disguised god, Pentheus immediately assumes that the priest is abusing the secretive nature of the cult in order to engage in sexual liaisons with the Theban women whom he has bewitched. Despite having condemned these actions, Pentheus later obeys the priest and allows the disguised god to dress him in the robes of a female bacchant in order to pursue the maenads and spy on their actions, which Pentheus still presumes are sexual. Here the 'masked' Dionysos appeals to the sexual curiosity of Pentheus and toys with the division between the sexes. Euripides presents Dionysos as not only aligned with the female principle, but capable of defending it. Pentheus wishes to bind the dissident women who have abandoned their homes and taken with them the children of the city,

³⁵ Seaforth, *Euripides' Bacchae: With an Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, 34.

³⁶ Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays*, 805-858, 270-272.

³⁷ Aeschylus fr. 61, cf. Otto, *Dionysus, Myth and Cult*, 176.

and Dionysos draws out his sexual curiosity and adorns him with women's clothing to lead him to his ultimate destruction.

Still, it is at the hands of the inspired women that Pentheus meets his end. Frenzied by the presence of Dionysos, the Theban women tear apart wild animals before attaining their ultimate hunting prize. In the end, it is Pentheus' own mother, Agave, who parades his severed head into the city as her prize, having mistook it for a beast (Appendix B). The only comparable image to such violence being carried out by women in Greek myth are the Amazons, although they were thought to exist at a distance. As the Greeks broadened their understanding of geography, the Amazons were placed further and further from existence, ever beyond the known world.³⁸ This distance is contrasted by the violent maenads of Euripides, who stem from and return to, the city of Thebes.

Dionysos and the Patriarchy

Femininity in Euripides is a trait identified with the male god and toyed with by the women. The structure of Greek society which demanded women adhere to the home and thus remain indoors is overturned when the god draws the women into the mountains. Like Dionysos they embody duality, as they dwell amongst nature while also hunting and killing animals and men with their bare hands. There is the sense in Scene III that the women are cared for by the god, as they strike the earth to produce fresh water and they must simply dig to discover a flow of milk. They also suckle newborn animals and are adorned in the fawn-skin while tearing apart cattle with their bare hands.³⁹ In this setting

³⁸ Raphael Sealey, *Women and Law in Classical Greece* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 152.

³⁹ Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays*, 805-858, 270-272.

they are at once at peace with nature and capable of destroying it. The Theban women hold a great deal of physical power through their association with the god. In *Bacchae*, Dionysos provides a sense of unity between the natural and the divine, as he bestows divine power upon the women who celebrate his divinity in nature.

In their departure from the city, the women take to nature to worship apart from their civic lives. This departure closely resembles the isolation of Artemis and her mythic female followers.⁴⁰ In both cases, a natural setting functions as a liminal space between adolescence and marriage which had no equivalent in the Greek world. In *Bacchae* the return to nature experienced by the Theban women draws on some aspects of the Mother Goddess present in Dionysian cult. Through worshipping the god of wine, there was a deeper need to return to nature, and to achieve harmony through this return. For Euripides' bacchantes, this return is not without first destroying the civic nature of Thebes.

Here lies the most glaring contrast between the mythic followers of Dionysos and Artemis. For Artemis, the women reject sexuality altogether, retreating into a life of celibacy and ritual performance apart from the *polis*. For the maenads of *Bacchae*, the journey to the mountaintops is not to reject sexuality, as they suckle animals. Nor is this the case for Aeschylus, who refers to Dionysos as the 'yoker of maenads.'⁴¹ Rather, the maenads do not seek freedom from men entirely, but a rejection of the men of their households and larger *polis*. As a portion of the bacchantes of Euripides were clearly married,⁴² this rejection caused disruption to households in different ways.

⁴⁰ Lissarrague, "On the Wildness of Satyrs," in *Masks of Dionysus*, 122.

⁴¹ Aeschylus frag. 382 (TrGF 3), cf. *ibid*.

⁴² Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays*, 800-809. This brief section describes the age range of bacchantes, as 'young and old,' and some as unmarried. Others may be deduced as married, as Euripides claims they have left their children at home, and now give suck to animals.

Returning to Harrison's *Prolegomena*, she attributes the function of women in bacchic mythology to a historic phenomenon. Using the example of the maenads as nurses tending the infant Dionysos (*Dionysos Liknites*), Harrison argues that this myth represents a transition away from an earlier matriarchal society, in which Dionysos was conceived as the 'son of his mother.'⁴³ As society developed, Dionysos was to pass from the feminine sphere of the mother into the masculine world of his divine father. The myth of the god's birth which involves Semele and a second birth from the thigh of his father embodies this transition to a patriarchal system, in which Dionysos is conceived of as the 'son of his father.'⁴⁴ In Harrison's view, the myths of Dionysos are evidence of social and religious development and his mythical followers (maenads, satyrs, and kouretes) are fictitious renderings of the original cult following. Although Harrison's work in *Prolegomena* has been criticized for its theoretical nature rooted in sociology,⁴⁵ the feminine aspect to the Dionysos question remains obscure. It is by focusing on female narratives presented in Dionysian mythology that light is shed on the nature of the god's female followers. As mythology often serves to provide context for the ritual and societal proceedings of everyday life, it would be mistaken to dismiss the roles of women in the myths of a god so deeply associated with gender identity.

Distinguishing Myth from Historic Practice

The behaviour of female followers in myth and reality fall under the single term 'maenadism.' In his commentary on Euripides' work, Seaford asserts that since *Bacchae*

⁴³ Harrison, *Prolegomena*, 402-3.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos: Method in the Study of a God*, 93.

serves as an aetiology of the cult of Dionysos in Thebes, the play is therefore pervaded by ritual.⁴⁶ The Theban women in *Bacchae* dance and partake in miracles on the mountaintops and these actions are mimicked by historic bacchantes in various vase paintings and literary sources, which will be discussed in the following chapter. Seaford concludes that there is no doubt that maenadism was practiced in reality and that various elements of ritual in Euripides likely took place on a smaller scale in cult activity. For example, the savagery of the women need not be taken literally as an act of consuming raw flesh, but as a reference to the handling of raw meat in ritual context.⁴⁷ Similarly, the suspicions of Pentheus which led him to accuse the female bacchantes of promiscuity likely gave voice to the suspicions of uninitiated citizens, viewing the secrets of the cult with nervous suspicion.⁴⁸ For Seaford, the female bacchantes of Euripides undoubtedly mirror the rituals of the day, but the extent to which these acts were embellished by Euripides remains controversial among scholars. Through material culture evidence which demonstrates the historic practice of maenadism, Seaford effectively justifies the use of *Bacchae* as a historical source on Dionysian cult practice.

Sexuality in Euripides

As addressed by Evans and Dodds in their respective commentaries, the language used by Euripides to discuss the frenzied women of Thebes is reminiscent of an earlier stage in Greek religion and to the rites of a male-female partnership. According to Dodds, it would appear that the sexual activities which Pentheus had feared the Theban women to

⁴⁶ Seaford, *Euripides' Bacchae: With an Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, 35.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 36-7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

be engaged in were actually much calmer than the tragic hero would believe.⁴⁹ In the rites of both Demeter and Dionysos, the word *orgia* is typically used; a plural noun from which the English language derives the word “orgy.” According to Dodd’s analysis, the word *orgia* holds the same root as *ergon*, or “deed,” and the phrase as it relates to cult practice is understood to mean “things done.” In this case, the sexually charged nature of the word is absent from Euripides’ work and the sexual connotation would develop later, amidst the Hellenistic and Roman anxiety toward Dionysian cult.⁵⁰

By contrast, Evans suggests that the word had been derived from *organ*, which is “to be aroused,” “run riot,” or “to be in heat.”⁵¹ Evan’s etymology of the word is more emotionally charged than the forensic approach proffered by Dodds and may serve to reflect the influence of the god upon the frenzied women of Euripides. Evans’ approach also captures the maenads of Greek art and literature, enraptured in what Henrichs refers to as ‘Dionysiac seizure,’ with their heads thrown back in convulsion, shouting and treading on the ground ‘like animals.’⁵² In either case, Euripides does not explicitly show any sexual activity on behalf of the women, regardless of any modern sense of the language used.

Revisiting Matriarchy

Euripides also used language which denotes an earlier association in Greek religion between the all-important cults of the Mother Goddess and son, adding another

⁴⁹ E.R. Dodds, *Euripides’ Bacchae: Greek Text and Commentary* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1960), 67.

⁵⁰ Evans, *The God of Ecstasy: Sex-roles and the Madness of Dionysos*, 69.

⁵¹ Ibid, 70.

⁵² Albert Henrichs, “Greek Maenadism from Olympias to Messalina,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 82 (1978): 122.

layer to the myriad of relationships the god shares with female figures in mythology and cult practice. These references to the Mother Goddess cults may also provide some historical context for the matriarchal theory presented by Harrison. In her desire to link the second birth of Dionysos to a transition in Greek society from the ‘primitive’ matriarchal to the patriarchal state, Harrison’s analysis lacked historical context and evidence, for which her work in *Prolegomena* received criticism.⁵³ Alternatively, the double birth myth which Harrison grappled with may have reflected the evolution of Greek religion from cults of the Mother Goddess and her male attendant, to the predominant male figure. The historical transition may be realized when compared with the evidence presented by Evans for a gynocentric religious system transitioning into a male dominated one, propelled by the increasing male control in the civic sphere.

Throughout *Bacchae* are several references to a Mother Goddess, be it in reference to Semele, Kybele, or Rhea. These references appear to have historic significance, as Evans has demonstrated that in various societies throughout the Mediterranean and beyond, the earliest form of religion had involved a great-mother goddess attended by a lesser male figure; either a brother, son, or lover.⁵⁴ For Dionysos, this becomes even more significant, as Herodotus and other ancient authors present the Egyptian Osiris, brother and husband to the powerful goddess Isis, as an earlier form of

⁵³ McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos: Method in the Study of a God*, 93. Here, McGinty assesses Harrison’s *Prolegomena* alongside her later publication, *Themis*. McGinty criticizes both sociological approaches to interpreting Dionysos for their lack of historical evidence. The timeline proposed by Harrison lacks satisfying evidence of each individual stage of development addressed in her analysis.

⁵⁴ Evans, p. 22ff and p. 30ff., cf. Evans, *The God of Ecstasy: Sex-roles and the Madness of Dionysos*, 67.

Dionysos.⁵⁵ According to Evans, the organization of a religious system around a female deity is considered primitive to the later transition into male-dominated religious systems, as the former demonstrates a structuring of society before warfare dominated economic development and political expansion.⁵⁶ Using ancient Crete as an example, Evans develops analysis of the many female deities (or more appropriately, figures) represented in artwork from the island. While the names of these goddesses remain obscure, they all bear with them associations with nature. These associations were later identified with the goddess Demeter, whose name literally translates to ‘Mother Barley.’⁵⁷ It was because of Demeter’s nature as the provider of humankind’s most basic necessity that she was held in great reverence, especially among agricultural-based societies. In terms of the material gains from such a deity, Dionysos seems a likely companion to the goddess of grain, providing wine to supplement the gifts of Demeter.

Teiresias uses this logical and uncharacteristically base argument in *Bacchae* to persuade Pentheus into worshipping the god. Claiming:

Young man— there are two great first things that we
 As mortals have: the goddess of the earth,
 Deméter— call her by whatever name
 You wish— gave us our solid food, and he
 Who came next, Sémelê’s child, gave us liquid—
 From the grape— as counterpart to Demeter’s bread.
 The god’s invention, it gives us poor mortals
 Release from pain and sorrow, when we’re filled
 With what flows from the vine; it gives us sleep,
 When we can forget the evils of the day.

Euripides, trans. Gibbons and Segal, *Bacchae*, 321-330

⁵⁵ Herodotus, *The Histories*, 2.42 and Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, ed. Rackham, 3. 21-23.

⁵⁶ Evans, p. 22ff and p. 30ff., cf. Evans, *The God of Ecstasy: Sex-roles and the Madness of Dionysos*, 67.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Although Teiresias is speaking in a far more base and materialistic sense than is typically associated with the famed seer, the logical association of the two deities for their ability to provide mortals with sustenance conveys the long held tradition of a male and female divine partnership providing for the human race, which Evans establishes as the earliest form of religion in ancient Mediterranean societies. Herodotus also notes this union of Demeter and Dionysos in *The Histories*, claiming: ‘The Egyptians say that Demeter and Dionysus are the rulers of the underworld kingdom.’⁵⁸ According to Evans, Dionysos also appears secondary to Demeter, or to the Mother Goddess from whom she is derived. The sustenance offered by the earth is provided naturally, while the secondary process of fermenting grapes to produce wine represents a step beyond nature and therefore a human modification. In Evan’s view, Dionysos transitioned from being secondary to the female figure, to prominent in his own right as society became more complex. For ancient, especially nomadic societies, the importance of a Mother Goddess figure to provide sustenance was paramount.⁵⁹ Once the agricultural revolution had given way to complex social structures and a division of labour, the modification of the natural world to provide pleasures such as wine took centre stage. In sum, the cult of Dionysos may have eclipsed an earlier matriarchal tradition; however, the effeminate god maintained an association with women through myth as well as historic cult.

The emphasis of Dionysos as a life-giving deity akin with Demeter is evident also in fertility festivals, such as the Skiereia, held biennially in Arkadia:

⁵⁸ Herodotus, *The Histories*, 2.123.

⁵⁹ Evans, *The God of Ecstasy: Sex-roles and the Madness of Dionysos*, 67.

[In Alea, Arkadia there is] a shrine of of Dionysos with a statue, where they hold the feast of the Rotunda every second year; women are beaten at the feast of Dionysos by the command of the Delphic oracle...

Pausanias, trans. Levi, *Guide to Greece*, vol. 2, 8. 23. 1

The flogging of women at the Skiereia is similar to the later Lupercalia festival in Rome, during which women were whipped with thongs in order to encourage fertility.⁶⁰ It must also be noted that the Lupercalia was held in honour of the god Faunus, the Roman equivalent of Pan, often seen in Greek mythology in the company of Dionysos and in the pursuit of maenads. The promotion of fertility through a Dionysian festival appears to reference the Egyptian association of the god with their own Osiris, responsible both for governing the Afterlife and flooding the Nile river to promote crop growth. Both Dionysos and Osiris underwent rebirth and this life-giving aspect is expressed in their respective ties to fertility. As women have traditionally been the targets for fertility rites, this festival presents another bond between women and the god of wine similar to his counterpart, Demeter.

Another goddess with whom the god of wine is often linked is Artemis; goddess of the hunt and sexual independence. As deities of the natural world, both share motifs in myth and artistic imagery. As Evans asserts, due to the similarities between Artemis and a similar goddess with ecstatic rites in Asia Minor, the Greeks dubbed her Artemis of Ephesus. Both of these nature goddesses are derived from the earlier Great Mother, or *potnia theon*, "Our Lady of the Beasts."⁶¹ Although the Archaic cult of Artemis featured exclusively virgins (unmarried women), like the cult of Dionysos members of the

⁶⁰ "Lupercalia." Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2007, accessed July 20, 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lupercalia>.

⁶¹ Evans, *The God of Ecstasy: Sex-roles and the Madness of Dionysos*, 78-9.

Artemisian cult participated in religious dance, sometimes while wearing masks.⁶² Both Dionysos and Artemis maintain a retinue of female worshippers in myth and illustrate an alternative for Greek women to marriage, which their patriarchal society demanded. As Detienne argues in *Dionysos Slain*, in mythological context, both Dionysos and Artemis are linked by the liminal space provided to their followers as well as their shared natural element.⁶³ Both utilize a return to nature over the domestic alternatives for Greek women and share common history of association with the Mother Goddess. Dionysos appears as the defender of the female principle not just in Euripides, but through historic ties to the Mother Goddess and as the provider of a peaceful return to nature for his mythical maenads, apart from the domestic sphere.

Similarly, Seaford presents the image of women abandoning the home for worship in the mountains as a transcendence of the rigid confines of the Greek *polis*. The structure of Greek tragedy often centres around the conflict between adherence to the *polis* and adherence to the *oikos*. According to Seaford, the expression of this tension in myth requires a role-reversal targeting the women, who most adhered to the household and were confined to the individual houses which comprised the *polis*. This reversal which draws the women out of what the Greeks considered as their natural place, introduces a new form of harmony by bringing together the women to create a unified group. In myth, this often involves denial and resistance which is met by the god with frenzy.⁶⁴ In sum, both Detienne and Seaford maintain that women in the myths of Dionysos are drawn out

⁶² Nilsson, 1950, p. 503; Gimbutas, p. 199, cf. Ibid, 79.

⁶³ Marcel Detienne, *Dionysos Slain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 25.

⁶⁴ Seaford, *Dionysos: Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World*, 34.

of the *polis* to dwell amongst nature and to worship the god in a state of removal from the roles ascribed to them by the structure of Greek society.

Conclusion

The Greek cult of Dionysos is derived from an ecstatic Thracian tradition. Although Herodotus had attributed the practices of the Greek cult to the Egyptians, modern scholarship suggests the god is descendant from the earliest forms of religion in the Mediterranean. Women permeate Dionysian mythology and play a key role in Euripides' *Bacchae*, as they derive strength from their association with Dionysos. Analysis of Dionysian mythology along with references to female figures in *Bacchae* connect Dionysos with ancient cults of the Mother Goddess, thereby presenting another aspect of female prominence in Dionysian mythology.

Through the analysis of women in Dionysian myth and *Bacchae*, an image is reflected—albeit a distorted view—of women engaged in cult practice. The feminine aspect of the god is made clear in physical description in Euripides as well as the *Homeric Hymns*. For the god is described as 'pretty,' 'effeminate,' and as having 'long flowing hair.'⁶⁵ In *Bacchae*, Pentheus takes care to mention the fair skin of the disguised god during their first encounter.⁶⁶ As fair skin held a strong tradition of marking femininity in Greek artwork, the implications of Pentheus' comment is clear: Dionysos, as the god of division and duality, who draws out the repressed emotions of Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae*, is also the liberator of repressed emotion in women.

⁶⁵ Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays*; For 'pretty,' see 2.545. For a description of hairstyle, see 2.541-3, 2.580.

⁶⁶ Ibid, lines 541-5.

Myth and artwork presents an image of Dionysian cult in which women are celebrated in celebrating the god. The women of myth were granted a liminal space only comparable to the followers of Artemis and in this setting the god of ecstasy liberated women from the confines of the *oikos* and *polis*. The extent to which this sentiment was experienced in reality, however, will be addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Historic Mentions and Archaeological Depictions of Female Bacchants

Introduction

Because the cult of Dionysos is by nature a mystery cult, the historic activities which accounted for the *teletai* or ‘secret rites’⁶⁷ performed by bacchants remain unknown. What is available is literary and epigraphic evidence that convey the social status and reputation of cult followers in the Hellenistic period. As Kraemer aptly states, the exact nature of Dionysian cult practices in the fourth and fifth centuries BCE are uncertain; however, cult organization becomes more defined in the historical record in the Hellenistic period.⁶⁸ To illustrate the bacchants’ various levels of involvement in Dionysian cult, the few available epigraphic sources must be supplemented by historical sources including Pausanias, Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch and others, as well as knowledge of the structure of the Greek *polis*.

“Origins of Greek Dionysian Cult” examines the problems with identifying the origins of Dionysian cult in Greece. Although the earliest epigraphic evidence for Dionysian cult does not appear in the historical record until the third century BCE, art and literature connect Dionysos with orgiastic worship as early as the Archaic period. It is for this reason that *Bacchae* remains a relevant historic source, as constitutes an act of reception for the Dionysian cult in the Classical period.

“Festivals and Vase Paintings” studies the city-wide participation of citizens in the Dionysia using specific artistic and literary examples. The inclusivity of Dionysian

⁶⁷ Fritz Graf, and Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 50.

⁶⁸ Ross S. Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession: The Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysus," *The Harvard Theological Review* 72, no. 1/2 (1979): 65.

celebration is expressed in *Bacchae*, as the chorus of Asian bacchantes encouraged the *polis* to dance.⁶⁹ Aside from city-wide revels, evidence of cult activity performed by initiated citizens is lacking. Henrichs uses an inscription from Magnesia to argue that the *orgia* of Dionysos had been restricted to women in the Greek world at least until the end of the Hellenistic Period.

The extent to which female cult practices were maenadic is addressed in “Erigone.” In honour of Erigone, a female figure of Dionysian mythology, the ‘swinging ritual’ or *Aiora* was instituted as a part of the annual Anthesteria Festival. The solemn commemoration by Athenian women of Erigone’s death presents historic maenads in a composed manner, similar to the Asian bacchantes of Euripides.

The sections “Dancers of Pausanias” and “Maenads in Plutarch’s *Moralia*” both examine a group of bacchic women (the *Thyiades*) and their public dance performances. Pausanias addresses their renown, while Plutarch highlights the women’s travels. Both serve to emphasize the unprecedented privileges afforded women within the cult. The significance of these privileges is best understood alongside a study of women and Greek law.

“Women and Greek Law” studies the restrictions imposed upon women in Greek society. Women were assigned to a male *kyrios*, or guardian, and maintained no political power in Greek society. Their lack of independence emphasizes the unique case of the *Thyiades* presented by Pausanias and Plutarch. Through granting women participation in public life, the cult of Dionysos offered women limited agency within their society without challenging the respectability afforded them by seclusion.

⁶⁹ Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays*, 95-6, 111-3, 152-165.

“The Orphic Tablets” discusses the chthonic approach to Dionysian worship through the ivy-shaped gold tablets found in a woman’s sarcophagus in Pelinna. As the woman had been initiated into the mysteries of Dionysos *Bacchius*, she was involved in cult activity at Pelinna as both a bacchant and an Orphic. Her funerary inscription appeals to the chthonic aspect of the Orphic Dionysos as a liberator from mortal life. These tablets present another form of female participation in bacchic worship, as Orphics were able to reconcile themselves with the ‘madness’ aspect of Dionysos through chthonic association. Like the solemnity of the Aiora ritual, these tablets convey another avenue for female worship apart from maenadism.

“Herodotus” and “Bacchic Demographic” both examine the participation of women in public ritual. Herodotus gives an account of an Egyptian fertility festival which closely resembles the Greek *phallophoria*. Herodotus’ comparison affirms the presence of women in the phallic processions of both Egypt and Greece and asserts the centrality of gender in the worship of Dionysos. A hierarchy of female participation is presented by Diodorus Siculus, as he describes the mature women who make sacrifices, sing hymns, and practice the mysteries in honour of Dionysos. Both authors present images of female worshippers engaged in public ritual and in the company of fellow bacchants. Given the influence of seclusion, the hierarchy attested by Diodorus Siculus functioned as a unique opportunity for a diverse group of women to communicate with those beyond their respective neighbourhoods.

Women were offered another unique opportunity by Dionysian cult in Lakonia, where an image of Dionysos was restricted to women only. “Power in Iconography” addresses the significance of this gendered restriction through a re-examination of the Dionysian mask in cult practice. The assignation of this responsibility to women was

largely due to the ancient Greek view that women were more ‘passive’ and susceptible to non-human influence than their male counterparts. This responsibility constitutes yet another role for women in Dionysian cult.

Several bacchic inscriptions from the Hellenistic period place women in positions of authority in the cult of Dionysos. “Hellenistic Inscriptions” details epigraphic evidence from the third century BCE in Magnesia and Miletus which describe the appointment and responsibilities of female bacchantes in local cults. Ultimately, epigraphic evidence attests to female cult leaders earning income, receiving public honours, and leading their own *thiasoi*.

Through participation in Dionysian cult, women were afforded opportunities unprecedented in the ancient Greek world. They could engage in public performances, travel, organize public events, and socialize with individuals beyond their respective neighbourhoods. Dionysian cult offered women access to the public sphere without sacrificing the respectability afforded them by seclusion.

Origins of Greek Dionysian Cult

The cult of Dionysos stems from prehistoric fertility festivals; however, the exact date for the creation of Dionysian mystery cult is disputed.⁷⁰ The earliest epigraphic evidence of Dionysian cult does not appear until the third century BCE in Miletos, although art and literature provide earlier images of orgiastic Dionysian worship.⁷¹ Literary evidence for the association of Dionysos with female orgiastic worship in the

⁷⁰ Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession: The Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysus," 57.

⁷¹ F. Sokolowski, *Lois Sacrées de L'Asie Mineure* (Paris: Ecole Française d'Athènes, 1955), 48. Cf. Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession: The Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysus," 63.

Classical period is featured prominently in “Hymn I” of the *Homeric Hymns* which associated Dionysos with his female following by the epithet ‘he who drives women insane.’⁷²

Euripides’ *Bacchae* remains a relevant artistic source of evidence for the role of women in Dionysian cult in the Classical period. The presentation of women within the play constitutes a cultural reception of Dionysian cult from that period. Given the many symbolic and literal correspondences between the actions of the maenads in *Bacchae* and historical sources on Dionysian worship and celebration, it can be hypothesized that the women in *Bacchae* perform ritual activities that were contemporary with Euripides.⁷³ However, this hypothesis is challenged by Dodds and others, who claim that Euripides had based his narrative on the mythic origin of Dionysian worship at Thebes. Since the cult had by then been well established in Greece, the maenadic activity depicted by Euripides required no concern for historical accuracy, as Euripides’ audience would have been familiar with the bacchic mythology. According to Dodds, Euripides selected the cult of Dionysos as an accessible example with which to express the anxieties surrounding the contemporary reception of other oriental mystery religions in Athens.⁷⁴

⁷² Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles, 6.150-160, and Homer and Michael Crude, *The Homeric Hymns*, 1.16. Unfortunately however, the *Homeric Hymns* have proved challenging to date with any certainty. Crude notes that the *Homeric Hymns* are generally attributed to various poets, most of whom were active during the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. See *ibid.*, xi.

⁷³ Kraemer, “Ecstasy and Possession: The Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysus,” 60.

⁷⁴ E.R. Dodds, *Euripides’ Bacchae: Greek Text and Commentary*, xxii. Dodds states elsewhere the possibility that Euripides was referencing the reception of the cult of Sabazios. In his “Introduction to *Bacchae*,” Dodds discusses at length the similarities between the cults of Sabazios and Dionysos, though maintains that the two are to be treated as independent followings. This notion is typical among scholars, and the Sabazios/Dionysos ‘problem’ is summarized by Nilsson as: ‘[Sabazios is] akin to Dionysos, but foreign and despised.’ Martin P. Nilsson, *The Dionysian Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age*, 23. Dodds, “Introduction to *Bacchae*,” xxxix-xxv, cf. Kraemer, “Ecstasy and Possession: The Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysus,” 62.

Festivals and Vase Paintings

Bacchants in the historic cult of Dionysos have been widely depicted in vase paintings, mosaics and the like, and such depictions shed light on the activities practised by women in the cult. A Classical period frieze (Appendix C) depicts a cortege of two satyrs and a female follower in a Dionysian procession.⁷⁵ Focusing on the maenad exclusively, she wears loose hair and billowing dress, the most prominent features of maenads in Classical artwork. She is also striking a drum, which corresponds with other literary and archaeological evidence that music and dance were common practices in Dionysian worship and public festivals.⁷⁶

One such reference to public music and dance is presented by the chorus of Asian bacchants in *Bacchae*, encouraging the *polis* to dance.⁷⁷ Appendix D, a 5th century BCE red-figure krater by the Niobid painter, depicts dancing satyrs while a man adorned with a laurel crown plays the pipes. Both the frieze (Appendix C) and the red-figure krater (Appendix D) display mortals playing instruments and leading the mythological satyrs with their music. These public dances correspond with sources concerning the Dionysia, or the ‘Festival of Dionysos’ occurring in the month of the Anthesterion. The Dionysia was established in Athens either during the tyranny of Peisistratos, 545-28 BCE, or soon after the establishment of democracy in 508/7.⁷⁸ On the first day of the Dionysia, the

⁷⁵ The marble frieze is a Roman Period copy of an original from Classical Greece. See Appendix C.

⁷⁶ Evans, *The God of Ecstasy: Sex Roles and the Madness of Dionysos*, 71.

⁷⁷ Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays*, 95-6, 111-3, 152-165. These are a few samples from the chorus on music and dancing in the opening of the play. An apt example is 142-3, in which the chorus states: ‘Be holy! Now the whole earth Will dance together when Bromios (Dionysos) leads Worshippers to the mountain...’

⁷⁸ Louise Bruit Zaidman and Pauline Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 48.

statue of Dionysos Eleuthereus was transported from its sanctuary to the *gymnasion*, was returned the following day, and then led to the *orkhēstra* (in the centre of the theatre) in a series of processions involving civic officials, representatives of local residents, actors, offerings of model phalli, and sacrificial bulls.⁷⁹

One such source on the Dionysia is the Greek biographer Philostratus, who commented on his distaste for the ‘effeminate’ dances taken up by the Athenians as they flocked towards the theatre.⁸⁰ As a source from circa the first century CE, Philostratus writes long after the institution of the Dionysia. His commentary on the ‘effeminate’ dances likely referred to the *kōmos* (revel)— a procession which occurred on the central day of the festival and involved men carrying torches through city streets while singing and dancing along with *auloi* players. The *kōmos* was a city-wide celebration that was followed by a private *symposion*.⁸¹ While his comment on the effeminacy of the dances performed (presumably by men) indicates a resemblance to dances performed by women, Philostratus neglects to mention whether women participated in this part of the Dionysia.⁸²

Just as the Asian chorus of bacchants called for the participation of the entire city in Dionysian worship, so too was this the case for the celebration of the Dionysia. Public festivals in honour of Dionysos encouraged the participation of both sexes, regardless of

⁷⁹ Ibid, 106. Interestingly, Zaidman and Pantel also single out the Athenian Great Dionysia of 333 BCE, in which no less than 240 bulls were sacrificed in honour of the god. (30)

⁸⁰ Philostratus, and Eusebius, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana, the Epistles of Apollonius and the Treatise of Eusebius*, trans. F.C. Conybeare (London: W. Heinemann, 1912), 4.21.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² As women generally enjoyed greater independence in the Hellenistic period, this may have been the case in Philostratus’ own time. However, the possibility of female participation in the *kōmos* raises questions beyond the scope of this thesis.

whether they had been initiated into Dionysian mystery cult. A common problem with assessing the status of bacchants within the cult and the larger Greek *polis* is aptly captured by the disciples of Orpheus, who coined the expression: ‘Many are the *thrysoi*-bearers, few are the *Bacchoi*.’⁸³ Dionysian festivals attracted many citizens to join in public revel and ritual, but evidence for initiates into sacred cult is considerably lacking. Henrichs maintained in his assessment of Hellenistic maenadic practices that the *orgia* of Dionysos had been restricted to women in the Greek world at least until the end of the Hellenistic Period; however, this assessment hinges on the fact that no evidence to the contrary has yet been uncovered. Henrichs’ chief source in his analysis is a Hellenistic inscription from Magnesia, which refers to a local *thiasos* with the masculine title *kataibátai*, which indicates that it must have included male members.⁸⁴ From the Magnesian inscription it is clear that while some *orgia* had been restricted to female members, other religious rites were open to all.

Erigone

The tale of Icarius and Erigone serves as another example of ritual acts corresponding with Dionysian mythology. According to Pseudo-Apollodorus and others, during the rule of Pandion, Dionysos had shown Icarius how to produce wine. Upon sharing this skill with the local populous, Icarius was killed by the intoxicated peasants, fearing that they had been poisoned. In response, Erigone promptly hanged herself and their dog Maira jumped into a well. In order to appease Erigone, many Athenian women

⁸³ Plato, *Phaedo* 69 c = *Orphicorum fragmenta* F. 5, ed. O. Kern., cf. Marcel Detienne, *Dionysos at Large* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 17.

⁸⁴ Albert Henrichs, "Greek Maenadism from Olympias to Messalina," 133.

apparently ended their lives in the same manner, as Erigone had called for Athenian women to suffer her same death if the death of Icarius was not investigated and avenged.⁸⁵ Pseudo-Hyginus, writing in the second century CE, explained a similar phenomenon known as the Aiora, a part of the Anthesteria festival:

And so when these things happened as described, Apollo gave oracular response to them when they consulted him, saying that they should appease Erigone if they wanted to be free from the affliction. So since she hanged herself, they instituted a practice of swinging themselves on ropes with bars of wood attached, so that the one hanging could be moved by the wind. They instituted this as a solemn ceremony [i.e. the Aiora on the third day of the Anthesteria festival], and they perform it both privately and publicly, and call it *alétis*, aptly terming her mendicant who, unknown and lonely, sought for her father with the god. The Greeks call such people *alétides*.

Pseudo-Hyginus, trans. Grant, *Astronomica* 2. 2

In the case of Erigone's myth the actions of a woman from Dionysian mythology took centre stage and were mirrored by women in ritual practice. In the Aiora, an act of devotion was celebrated rather than the frenzied madness typically associated with maenadism. While Pseudo-Hyginus is a second century CE source, an Athenian red-figure drinking cup (Appendix D) from about 440 BCE likely depicts this very practice.⁸⁶ The 'swinging ritual' or Aiora was a part of the annual Anthesteria Festival, which the satyr depicted on the cup serves to represent as a whole. The celebration of the Aiora served as a designated space within this so-called 'cult of frenzied women' for peaceful celebration, which draws many questions about the extent to which we are to regard this cult as maenadic or rapturous. The practical application of the myth into the ritual setting calls to mind the Asian maenads of *Bacchae*, who comprise the god's entourage and provide a peaceful foil to the frenzied Theban women. Their non-frenzied state and clear

⁸⁵ Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology*, 3.14.7.

⁸⁶ Jon D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 61.

narration in *Bacchae* seem to align with more moderate religious practices such as the Aiora. The Asian maenads may provide a more accurate representation of bacchic women than the crazed Theban women with whom they are contrasted in *Bacchae*.

Dancers of Pausanias

Several historical accounts present female bacchantes engaged in public dances in honour of Dionysos. Pausanias presents one such example in his second century CE *Guide to Southern Greece*. As Pausanias claims that lively music was performed annually in rural Hermione, where musical and sporting contests were held in celebration of the god at the Temple of Dionysos Melanaigis (of the Black Goat), it is clear that public performances were not limited to urban areas.⁸⁷ Pausanias' description of the Thyiades and Delphian women of Phokis are a prime example of dances performed by troupes of entirely female bacchantes. These women routinely gathered and made a pilgrimage to Parnassos to dance for the god:

Homer speaks of the beautiful dancing-floors of Panopeus [in Phokis], I could not understand until I was taught by the women whom the Athenians call Thyiades. The Thyiades are Attic women, who with the Delphian women go to Parnassos every other year and celebrate orgies in honour of Dionysos. It is the custom for these Thyiades to hold dances at places, including Panopeus, along the road from Athens. The epithet Homer applies to Panopeus is thought to refer to the dance of the Thyiades.

Pausanias, trans. Levi, *Guide to Greece*, 10.4.3

What stands apart in Pausanias' description of public dances is the women's pilgrimage. This biennial journey is a form of the 'liminal space' discussed earlier in relation to Dionysian mythology. Like the Theban maenads in *Bacchae*, the participation

⁸⁷ Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, trans. Peter Levi. Vol. 2: Southern Greece (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), 2.34.11-35.1.

of the Thyiades in Dionysian worship removed them from their civic lives and the confines of the Greek *oikos*. As the maenads of myth and *Bacchae* are able to dwell together in Dionysian worship and are at the same time separated from the traditional feminine roles ascribed by the Greek *polis*, so the Thyiades and Delphian women illustrated by Pausanias were free to travel together to Parnassos in the name of Dionysos, seemingly without male supervision. Not only did they gain public recognition through the dances they performed, but were able to ‘celebrate orgies in honour of Dionysos.’⁸⁸

Regardless of whether these sacred rites involved amorous activity, the social mobility exercised by these women is paramount. The ‘liminal space’ enjoyed by the Thyiades was occupied by ritual mobility and did not require the women to be severed from the activity of the *polis*, as were the Theban women in *Bacchae*. Their dancing along the road from Athens was a renowned occurrence, as Pausanias claims that the Homeric epithet “over the lovely dancing-rings of Panopeus”⁸⁹ is attributed to the sight. The Thyiades enjoyed biennial travel as well as the opportunity to perform publicly for the people of Athens, for which they received great acclaim. Through participation in Dionysian cult, the Thyiades attained unprecedented social mobility.

Maenads in Plutarch’s *Moralia*

The freedom for mobility afforded the Thyiades is also addressed by Pausanias’ contemporary Plutarch, in his account on the ‘Bravery of Women’ in *Moralia*. Elements of Plutarch’s account sets this occurrence in the Third Sacred War, which has been dated

⁸⁸ For the etymology of orgia, see: Evans, *The God of Ecstasy: Sex-roles and the Madness of Dionysos*, 69-70.

⁸⁹ Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Viking, 1996), 11.668.

to about 353 BCE.⁹⁰ Here, he describes the devotees of Dionysos from Phokis (Thyiades) wandering at night in ‘Bacchic frenzy.’ When the women ‘unwittingly’ reached Amphissa, they collapsed from exhaustion and slept in the marketplace. Plutarch states that due to the Sacred War occurring at that time, many soldiers had been stationed at Amphissa. Local wives in particular were fearful for the safety of the Thyiades, and stood guard in silence around them for protection as they slept. As they awoke, the local women offered food to each, some leaving to escort them to the frontier.⁹¹

Plutarch’s account provides a glimpse into female relationships in the Greek world and attests to the mobility enjoyed by the Thyiades in Pausanias’ account. Plutarch’s use of language also suggests that there were no men present among the Thyiades, ergo the women had travelled without a male guide, during wartime. Whether or not Plutarch’s account proved accurate in its entirety, he presents a remarkable image of the Bacchic women of Phokis. As a unit, the Thyiades were able to engage in an activity otherwise considered shameful or inappropriate: travel by night apart from a male guardian. Here we may observe the practical implications of the cult, apart from the mysticism and mass hysteria of mythic sources.

These images of female mobility are contrasted by the married women of Amphissa who came to the aid of the maenads:

Finally, the women of Amphissa, after winning the consent of their husbands, accompanied the strangers, who were safely escorted as far as the frontier.

Plutarch, trans. Babbitt, *Moralia*, 249

⁹⁰ P. Stadter, *Plutarch’s Historical Methods* (Harvard 1965) cf. Jan N. Bremmer, “Greek Maenadism Reconsidered,” *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik* 55 (1984): 274.

⁹¹ Plutarch, *Plutarch’s Moralia*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (London: W. Heinemann, 1927), 249.

Plutarch reminds us in this short passage of the highly regulated nature of the lives of Greek women. Goff contends in *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece* that the solidarity offered by the women of Amphissa to the Thyiades is a recognition of the mobility and autonomy provided to women in Dionysian cult. Because of the revered status of the female bacchantes the women of Amphissa (who were not at the time practicing maenads) felt compelled to provide protection and aid to the foreign worshippers.⁹²

Plutarch continues in his treatise on the 'Bravery of Women' to outline an occurrence involving female bacchantes in Elis. He describes the despot Aristotimus, who allowed his guards to exercise cruelty over the people of Elis. His despotic rule led to a slaughter of women as they attempted to leave the city after a noble woman, Micca, was slain by her pursuer Lucius. In response, the local cult of Dionysos led an appeal for peace.⁹³

The people of Elis, being highly indignant over this affair, the holy women of Dionysus, whom they call the Sixteen, taking suppliant branches and fillets from those sacred to the god, went to meet Aristotimus...His bodyguard made way out of respect, and the priestesses silently halted, first of all reverently holding out their suppliant branches. But when it became clear that they were petitioning in behalf of the women, and trying by entreaty to mollify his anger ... [he] screamed out that they had permitted the priestesses to come into his presence, and he made them drive these from the market-place by punishing or striking one or another, and he fined each one four hundred pounds.

Plutarch, trans. Babbitt, *Moralia*, 251

While Plutarch's account attests to the bravery of the 'Elean Sixteen,' as well as their ties to local women and the city of Elis, it also provides important information

⁹² Barbara E. Goff, *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 216.

⁹³ Ibid.

regarding the demographic involved in Dionysian cult. In his analysis of the Elean Sixteen, Bremmer argues that because the Sixteen had organized races for young girls (a typical form of Greek pre-marital rituals), it is likely that the Elean Sixteen also served a pre-matrimonial function.⁹⁴ Pausanias also describes the Elean Sixteen and their shared history with the Temple of Hera, where every four years, sixteen women were charged with hosting games in honour of the goddess, as well as weaving a dedicatory robe.⁹⁵ Pausanias notes that even the servants at these games were women.⁹⁶ He claims that following the ‘dreadful’ tyranny of Damophon in Pisa, who targeted the Eleans, Elis had resolved to rectify their relationship with the Pisians. To do this, the Eleans:

Chose a woman of the most venerable age and the most distinguished position and reputation from each of the inhabited cities of Eleia at that time to settle their quarrels for them. The cities of the women were chosen from Elis...; The Sixteen also arrange two dances, one of which they call Physkoa’s dance, the other Hippodameia’s... The story is that Dionysos slept with Physkoa and she bore his son Narkaios...they say Narkaios and Physkoa were the first to worship Dionysos. One of the honours Physkoa receives is the dances named after her that the sixteen women provide; and the Eleans still keep them up as well as ever though some of the cities have perished; they divide into eight tribes, so they take two women from every tribe.

Pausanias, trans. Levi, *Guide to Greece*, Vol. 2, 5.16.5-7

Pausanias illustrates the age range of local cults through his presentation of this ancient precursor to the Elean Sixteen of Plutarch’s treatise. He identifies the Elean Sixteen as being ‘of the most venerable age’ as well as having high social status, as the women were ‘of the most distinguished position and reputation.’ This former statement casts some doubt on examples of recent scholarship, which paint the women of Dionysian

⁹⁴ Bremmer, "Greek Maenadism Reconsidered," 283. See the full article for a further breakdown of the age and marital status of Greek bacchantes.

⁹⁵ Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, trans. Peter Levi. Vol. 2: Southern Greece, 5.16.2.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 5.16.1-3.

cult as seeking ritual during a socio-economic flux and finding pseudo-liberation and an outlet for hostility toward male dominated society in a cult which celebrated madness.⁹⁷ The interpretation of ecstatic worship and possession as a space for rebellion against male-dominated society overlooks what Goff refers to as a more 'explicitly gynocentric' approach to group ritual activity. According to Goff, the rejection of male authority in the ritual sphere need not be interpreted as a rejection of men or patriarchal society, but as a component of the positive affirmation of female value.⁹⁸

The high status of the Elean women likely lent legitimacy to the cult and justified their secretive cult in the eyes of doubtful Greek men and uninitiated citizens. Historical evidence points to a much more utilitarian purpose behind the rhapsodic dances and processions of Dionysian mythology and Euripides' *Bacchae*. In Elis, this took the form of public recognition and the opportunity to organize annual festivities, which offered esteemed positions to mature women of admirable class and status. It is unlikely that Dionysian cult was forbidden to women of lesser socio-economic status, although evidence to the contrary has yet to present itself.⁹⁹ A mid-fourth century inscription from Cholargos states that women at the Thesmophoria were required to provide various

⁹⁷ Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession: The Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysus," 78-80. Kraemer uses modern sociological research to assert that maenadism was likely an outlet for frustration regarding the marginalized status of Greek women. See also: Jan N. Bremmer, "Greek Maenadism Reconsidered," 284. Bremmer champions the notion of a 'half-hearted rebellion' against traditional society in his conclusion to analysis of ecstatic worship.

⁹⁸ Goff, *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece*, 276. Goff bases this assertion on the anthropological work of Linda Giles on the possession cults of Swahili, whereby women perceive their cult experience as gaining a sense of power from establishing connection with powerful forces through possession. Giles 1987: 235-36.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 273. Goff points out the works of Bremmer and Keuls, which both advocate for the elite social status of maenads. Indeed, epigraphical evidence speaks only to elite maenads, however their prominence in record cannot in itself disprove the presence of maenads of lower class and status.

supplies and 400 drachmas to the officiating priestess, thereby demonstrating that local priestesses occupied an administrative role.¹⁰⁰ These public privileges granted to women in Dionysian cult are extraordinary, particularly given the status of women in ancient Greece.

Women and Greek Law

Because women were denied political representation there is no reason to imagine that Greek law reflected their will or desires. Rather, the law should be understood as a means to promote conformity.¹⁰¹ While laws regarding women vary between Greek cities, there exists the predictable and common theme of male dominance. It was for this reason that a Greek woman would always be assigned a *kyrios*, or male guardian. The *kyrios* was initially a paternal role until the title shifted upon marriage to her husband, after which it could defer to her son or son-in-law. In Athens, the *kyrios* could give the woman in marriage, defend her in court, and administer property on her behalf. Although the authority of the *kyrios* may have varied in other Greek cities, the existence of such a system is certain.¹⁰² There is evidence at Gortyn, for example, that women had some choice in selecting a husband and that the dowry which was to accompany the bride into marriage was for her benefit and was to remain with her should the marriage end in death or dissolution.¹⁰³ In sum, Greek women were assigned a male guardian and could neither initiate legal action in court, nor serve as a witness on account of their gender.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 67.

¹⁰¹ Sealey, *Women and Law in Classical Greece*, 4.

¹⁰² Ibid, 154.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 155.

¹⁰⁴ Elisabeth Meier Tetlow, *Women, Crime, and Punishment in Ancient Law and Society*. Vol. 2 (New York: Continuum, 2005), 235.

Pericles' funeral oration offers a Classical Athenian view on the role of women in society, as he discourages women from engaging in public life. In his funeral speech to Athens following the Peloponnesian War, Pericles offered advice to war widows regarding the 'virtues of a wife':

If I am free to say anything to those who have now been widowed, about the virtues of a wife, I can convey my whole message in a brief exhortation: your glory is great if you do not fail to live up to your own nature, and if there is the least possible talk of you among men either for praise or for blame.

Thucydides 2.45.2

Here, Pericles suggests that for women, any public recognition is disreputable. This statement exemplifies the ancient Greek ideal that women adhere to the principle of seclusion. In practice, this meant not having to leave the home to perform work; a practice which was likely unattainable for lower class Greek families. It was considered respectable for Greek women to care both for the affairs of the *oikos*, and to leave public affairs to their male counterparts.¹⁰⁵

The dances described by Pausanias which had received some degree of acclaim thereby do not conform to the patriarchal Greek expectations for women. The Attic Thyiades who according to Pausanias had earned the Homeric epithet: "over the lovely dancing-rings of Panopeus,"¹⁰⁶ experienced a ritual break from conformed society that was celebrated and respected. It naturally follows that in the context of Dionysian ritual, public display was accepted as a form of divine reverence. As female roles in drama were granted exclusively to male actors, it would appear that the public dances of Pausanias served as an alternative for women who were excluded from the performing arts. Though

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 234-5.

¹⁰⁶ Homer, *The Odyssey*, 11.668.

participating in public dance as an act of religious devotion, the cult of Dionysos offered women another avenue in the world of ritual, as well as public spectacle.

This perspective on seclusion is maintained by Goff in her analysis of female adherence to the home in the Classical period. Goff states that modern scholars increasingly note the occasions on which women left the home to engage in trade and other such public activities.¹⁰⁷ Goff presents evidence from the contemporary Mediterranean region where seclusion is still widely considered ideal and where comparative anthropological findings suggest that women are free to engage in activities outside the home and still maintain a degree of respectability granted by seclusion by avoiding certain activities and locations designated to or frequented by men.¹⁰⁸

This sentiment is echoed in a neo-Pythagorean treatise attributed to the female philosopher Phintys, writing circa the third-fourth century BCE.

Women of importance in the *deme* make excursions from the house to sacrifice to the patron deity of the city on behalf of themselves and their husbands and their households.

Phintys, Thesleff 1965: 151-54¹⁰⁹

In an environment where recognition and distinction for women in the public sphere was hardly common, the dances detailed by Pausanias and Plutarch served as a means for women to gain recognition outside of the home, without challenging the traditional ideals of seclusion and female respectability. These excursions likely functioned as nurturing acts to protect the *oikos* through ritual.¹¹⁰ Through Dionysian cult

¹⁰⁷ Goff, *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece*, 2.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, Cohen 1990. Cf. *ibid*.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 48.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 47. Interestingly, Goff supports this notion with the excessive dedications to Asklepios, which, in the fourth century BCE, were left by more female than male worshippers. Several of

practice, women gained access to the public sphere without leaving behind the realm of domesticity. While Plutarch's account of Elis also included married women,¹¹¹ it is likely that women would have required the permission of their husband or *kyrios* to partake in cult activities given the status of women under Greek law. The privileges afforded women in bacchic cult were unprecedented, but were nevertheless contained by the patriarchal Greek society in which they were practiced.

The Orphic Tablets

While first-hand accounts of Dionysian cult from female bacchantes are lacking in the Classical period, the funerary inscriptions of female Orphics attest to their reverence for Dionysos. The Orphic gold tablets are funerary inscriptions which date from the late fifth century BCE to the second century CE and convey Greek and Roman conceptions of the afterlife. The owners of these tablets had been initiated into the mysteries of Dionysos *Bacchius*, which relied on Orphic poems or other works attributed to the mythical singer Orpheus.¹¹² The Orphics, members of a mystery cult which claimed to follow the teachings of Orpheus, shared a long history with Dionysos. Diodorus of Sicily records the earliest reference to the Orphic rites in the first century BCE, referring to them as *Orphikai teletai* (rituals of Orpheus)— a phrase which he regards as another name for the rites of Dionysos.¹¹³ This Dionysian connection may have been due to an earlier historic tradition, as Herodotus had combined “Orphic and Bacchic ritual” four hundred years

such inscriptions were left *hyper ton paidon*, or, “on behalf of children,” and therefore demonstrate the maternal aspect of female ritual and dedications.

¹¹¹ Plutarch, *Plutarch's Moralia*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, 251.

¹¹² Graf and Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets*, 50.

¹¹³ Bibl. 3.65.6, cf. *ibid*.

earlier as customs which were truly “Egyptian and Pythagorean.”¹¹⁴ The following inscription is from ivy-shaped gold tablets found in a woman’s sarcophagus in Pelinna, Greece, which date to the late fourth century BCE. Discovered on the chest of the deceased, the ivy-shape of the tablets alone serves as a bacchic symbol.¹¹⁵

- 1 Now you have died and now you have come into being, O thrice happy one, on this same day.
- 2 Tell Persephone that the Bacchic One himself released you.
- 3 Bull, you jumped into milk,
- 4 Quickly, you jumped into milk.
- 5 Ram, you fell into milk.
- 6 You have wine as your fortunate honour.
- 7 And below the earth there are ready for you the same prizes [*or rites*] as for the other blessed ones.¹¹⁶

As Euripides noted in *Bacchae*, the rites of Dionysos do not discriminate.¹¹⁷ As gold ivy leaves are themselves symbolic of Dionysos, it may be deduced that this woman was involved in cult activity at Pelinna as both a bacchant and an Orphic. The line: ‘Tell Persephone that the Bacchic One himself released you,’ attests to a chthonic approach to Dionysos. In these tablets the liberating aspect of Dionysian divinity is presented as a release from mortal life. The inclusion of Persephone in line 2 refers to the Orphic association of Dionysos with Persephone and the underworld.¹¹⁸ Much like the Egyptian Osiris, Dionysos is able to ‘liberate’ the living from life itself. Through chthonic association, the Orphics reconciled themselves with the ‘madness’ aspect of Dionysian

¹¹⁴ Herodotus, *The Histories*, 2.8.

¹¹⁵ Graf and Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets*, 36.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹¹⁷ Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays*, 1.244-8. “The god makes no distinction...He wishes to be honoured and exalted/By all alike, and no one is excluded.”

¹¹⁸ Graf and Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets*, 1. ‘In “Orphic” myth, Persephone, the Queen of the Underworld, is much more prominent than her husband.’ Further, Graf discusses how Orpheus was believed by the Orphics to have invented and taught *teletai* from Aristophanes onwards, especially the mystery rites of Dionysos. (50)

divinity. In much the same way that the dances of Pausanias were integrated into the *polis*, the Orphics assigned the ecstatic transcendence of the cult a place in Greek society.

The celebration of chthonic Dionysos by the Orphics is echoed by female participation in the Lenaia Festival. An annual festival in the month of *Lenaion*, the Lenaia was held to celebrate wine-making and to observe the destruction of the god alongside the literal destruction of the grape.¹¹⁹ The Lenaia Vases demonstrate female participation in this practice, such as Appendix F, which depicts women pouring and mixing wine before an image of Dionysos. A major source on the Lenaia celebrations comes from the sixth century BCE fragments of Heraclitus of Ephesus. These fragments describe a Lenaia procession in Ephesus accompanied by a hymn to the phallus and claim that ‘Hades is the same as Dionysos, in whose honour they go mad and celebrate the Lenaia.’¹²⁰ Heraclitus continues to state that if such processions and the singing of the phallic hymn were not in honour of Dionysos, that they would be regarded most shamefully.¹²¹ Heraclitus indicates that the worship of Dionysos (at least in the Lenaia celebrations) provided a permissive atmosphere, in which social taboos or deviations from the norm could be accepted by society in the name of divine reverence.

Herodotus

Perhaps the most striking image of the cult of Dionysos in the Classical period comes from Herodotus, in which he describes a phallic procession in honour of the god,

¹¹⁹ Miriam Guía, “Redefining Dionysos in Athens from the Written Sources: The Lenaia, Iacchos and Attic women,” in A. Bernabé et al., *Redefining Dionysos* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 106.

¹²⁰ οὗτος δὲ Ἄιδης καὶ Διόνυσος, ὅτεωι μαίνονται Clem. Al.*Prot.* 2.34.5 (= B 15 Diels-Kranz) cf. Miriam Guía, “Redefining Dionysos in Athens from the written sources: The Lenaia, Iacchos and Attic women,” 101.

¹²¹ Heraclitus (translation by Butterworth 1919, modified) in Bernabé 1988, 139. Cf. Ibid, 106.

which the Greeks had supposedly inherited from the Egyptians.

The rest of the festival of Dionysus the Egyptians celebrate pretty much as the Greeks do, except that there are no choral dances. Instead of phalluses, however, they have other contraptions—figurines, about a cubit tall, which are moved by strings. Women take them around the villages, and each figurine has a penis which is almost as big as itself and which moves up and down. The procession is led by a pipe-player, and the women follow singing hymns to Dionysus. The Egyptians have a sacred story as to why these figurines have oversized genitals, and why this is the only part of the body that can move.

Herodotus, trans. Waterfield, *Histories*, 2.48

The Egyptian procession presented by Herodotus closely resembles the Greek *phallophoria*, in which Greek villagers took to the streets in procession with phallic imagery and pulled phallic representations on carts.¹²² The phallic procession itself, which Herodotus claims was only recently instituted among the Greeks,¹²³ echoes the overt nature of the satyrs and the image of women being led by a pipe-player in procession is mirrored in several vase paintings and reliefs (Appendix C). The image of women carrying the universal symbol highlights the emphasis on gender and fertility in Dionysian worship. This phallic procession served as an appropriate means to honour the god as a symbol of fertility, as Osiris (and therefore Dionysos) had been associated with rebirth and regeneration in all forms. The phallus has also functioned throughout the ancient world as an apotropaic device. Herodotus further claims:

Melampus was the one who instituted the phallic procession in honour of Dionysus, and it was he who taught the Greeks to do what they do. What I am suggesting is that Melampus...also introduced into Greece a number of things he learnt which came originally from Egypt, including the Dionysian rites, which he hardly changed at all. I mean, I will absolutely deny that the similarities between the Greek and Egyptian versions of the rites are coincidental; if there were no influence from Egypt, the Greek rites would be home-grown and would not have

¹²² Martin P. Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 33.

¹²³ Herodotus, *The Histories*, 2.49.

been just recently introduced.

Herodotus, trans. Waterfield, *Histories* 2.49

Herodotus claiming that the rites introduced from Egypt had been ‘hardly changed at all’ reaffirms the presence of women in public festivals such as the phallic procession of both Egypt and Greece, which both assign roles to women. In either case, whether using the Egyptian dolls, or simply the phallus in Greek tradition, women publicly bearing the universal symbol of masculinity provides a striking image. In the permissive atmosphere of Dionysian worship, this action may be viewed as both a means to promote fertility and as a play on the traditional conceptions of gender.

Bacchic Demographic

The age range of women participating in public dances is addressed by Diodorus Siculus, writing in the first century BCE, in his comparison of female cult ritual with the actions of mythic maenads:

Consequently in many Greek cities every other year Bacchic bands of women gather, and it is lawful for the maidens to carry the *thyrsus* and to join in the frenzied revelry, crying out "*Euai!*" and honouring the god; while the matrons, forming in groups, offer sacrifices to the god and celebrate his mysteries and, in general, extol with hymns the presence of Dionysus, in this manner acting the part of the Maenads who, as history records, were of old the companions of the god.

Diodorus Siculus, trans. Oldfather, *Bibliotheca Historica* 4.3.1¹²⁴

According to Diodorus Siculus, participation in Dionysian ritual was not limited to maidens. In this description it is the mature women who make sacrifices, sing hymns, and practice the mysteries. From this account it may be inferred that the ‘matrons’ described

¹²⁴ Cf. Miriam Guía, in A. Bernabé et al., *Redefining Dionysos* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 164.

were knowledgeable cult leaders, passing down title and wisdom to the maidens who bear the *thrysoi* in their youth. As Phintys had attested in her Classical treatise, it was considered respectable for Greek women to engage in ritual activity on behalf of their *oikos*. It is likely that the matrons Diodorus Siculus described as offering sacrifices had educated younger initiates not only in cult practice, but also with regards to the responsibilities of women in Greek society. There also appears to have been a note of hostility from the Greek male audience. As Bremmer acknowledges, the phrase ‘the old woman acts the Bacchant’ had functioned as a proverb directed toward elderly women behaving in a manner unsuited to their age.¹²⁵

The system of succession alluded to by Diodorus Siculus would have further contributed to the unity of the group. Through participation in Dionysian cult, Greek women had the opportunity to socialize freely with women outside of their immediate vicinity, not limited to familial connections, or by age. This opportunity was likely rare for Greek women, given recent scholarship concerning the adherence of women to their respective neighbourhoods.¹²⁶

The public dances and positions held by cult members also placed women on public display and the significance of this involvement is addressed by Gilhus in her assessment of the bawdy humour and laughter among satyrs in festival activities. Gilhus attributes the participation of women in public display to a ritual break from conformed society. In a patriarchal society in which women’s lives were closely regulated, Gilhus asserts that: ‘the exposure of women was a dramatic break with common decency and had

¹²⁵ Pherekrates fr. 35k, cf. Bremmer, "Greek Maenadism Reconsidered," 284.

¹²⁶ W. K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 173.

therefore great ritual power.’¹²⁷ When taking into account the performances as well as the prominence of women in popular Dionysian mythology, this assessment emphasizes the esteemed position held by female cult members. These public performances offered women a place in public life and a brief reprieve from seclusion without compromising respectability. Yet this opportunity to safely and routinely abandon a fundamental aspect of Greek society was offered by the *polis* itself, thereby successfully integrating the female desire for participation by assigning it to the designated space of public ritual.

According to Diodorus Siculus, it appears that women of all ages could participate in Dionysian cult by the first century BCE and there seems to have been a ranking system based on age. If so, there would certainly have been different positions available to bacchantes of different ages. Herodotus claims that such positions once included the position of oracle. Herodotus states that the Satrae tribe had appointed an oracle of the god located in ‘the highest part of the mountain range in their country [Thrace].’ Herodotus claims that this oracle had been a prophetess, whose utterances were ‘no more elaborate than her counterpart at Delphi.’¹²⁸ The esteemed presence of women in Dionysian cult manifested in various ways, through their myriad of depictions in myth as well as the public privileges maintained by Greek women in the cult which, according to Herodotus, had even included the role of prophetess.

Power in Iconography

As discussed in Chapter 1, another element of the god’s divinity is understood through the

¹²⁷ Ingvild Sælid Gilhus. *Laughing Gods, Weeping Virgins: Laughter in the History of Religion* (London: Routledge, 1997), 40.

¹²⁸ Herodotus, *The Histories*, 7.111.

iconic mask image. In one particularly fascinating description, Pausanias describes a rendering of the god which was only available to priestesses:

[In the city Brysiai, in Lakonia] A temple of Dionysos still survives there with a statue in the open air; only women are allowed to see the statue inside the temple; and all the ceremonies of sacrifice are performed in secret by women.

Pausanias, trans. Levi, *Guide to Greece*, vol. 2, 3. 20. 3

Here, Pausanias presents an aspect of cult ritual which was limited to women only, despite the public worship and festivities seeming to have been open to all. The concept of restricting the view of an artistic rendering may be understood through a return to the Dionysian aspect of masks and theatre. An Attic red-figure volute krater by the Pronomos Painter (c. 410 BCE) demonstrates this significance through the depiction of a scene backstage at a satyr play (Appendix G). Here, Dionysos and wife Ariadne are seated, overlooking the scene. Meanwhile, the actors take no notice of the divinities, as if they were not physically present. A figure clearly labelled Heracles removes his mask, which appears to match his own expression, begging the observer to ask, is this not a depiction of Heracles playing himself? A male actor also removes his feminine mask, only to reveal feminine features beneath, bringing his sex into question. As Dionysos is so fittingly understood as a form of duality, he is understood to be both within the scene, and without. Essentially, if the entirety of theatrical performances occur in the god's domain, to what extent is he ever truly absent?¹²⁹

Similar logic applies to artistic renderings of the god and to sacred spaces. As Otto discusses at length using a series of vase paintings assembled by Frickenhaus, masks were

¹²⁹ Richard T. Neer, *Greek Art and Archaeology: A New History, c. 2500-c. 150 BCE* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012), 299.

often used in ritual as well as for display in temples of Dionysos.¹³⁰ Such masks made from grape vine wood and fig trees were used at Naxos to represent Dionysos *Baccheus* and *Meilichios*, and there is mention of a mask in Athens as well.¹³¹ An image of the god served to represent the deity who was conceived in myth as being entirely present and active in the lives of mortals. Therefore there is great spiritual power to be found in such representations as this example from Lakonia and the assignation of this duty to women demonstrates their centrality within the cult. The assignation of this task to women also embodies the ancient Greek view of women as being more ‘passive’ and therefore more susceptible to non-human influence than their male counterparts. The two greatest examples of this phenomena are the possessed maenads of Dionysos and the prophetess of Apollo at Delphi.¹³²

Such positions were maintained by the cult in Sikyon as well, as Pausanias records that the Sikonian women ‘sacred to Dionysos’ maintained images which were kept secret. One night per year the women bore these images from the *Kosmeterion* (Tiring-room) to the Temple of Dionysos with torches while accompanied by native hymns.¹³³

Hellenistic Inscriptions

Several Bacchic inscriptions from the Hellenistic period place women in positions of authority in the cult of Dionysos. In general, women benefited from greater access to the public sphere in the post-Classical period. The earliest epigraphic evidence for female

¹³⁰ August Frickenhaus, *Lenäenvasen* (Berliner Winckelmannsprogramm, Berlin, 1912), 72. Cf. Otto, *Dionysus, Myth and Cult*, 86.

¹³¹ Ath. 3.78c., and Ath.12.533c. Cf. Otto, *Dionysus, Myth and Cult*, 88.

¹³² Goff, *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece*, 3.

¹³³ Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, vol. 1, 2.7.5 - 6.

bacchants originates in Hellenistic Magnesia and Miletus. Between 278-250 BCE, the city of Magnesia in Asia Minor sought to obtain female leaders for their three Dionysian *thiasoi* from Thebes on the advice of the Delphic Oracle.¹³⁴ Goff argues that the personal resources held by these Theban women may be deduced from the fact that they were expected to move from Thebes to Magnesia, where they eventually died and received burial and honours at public expense, likely prior to 207/6 BCE.¹³⁵ They were remembered [presumably] due to their identification as maenads on their stelae.¹³⁶ The women of Magnesia are known as Thettale, Baubo, and Kosko, with Thettale having been the appointed “chairwoman.” She led a *thiasos* celebrating non-maenadic revels, which included men and, presumably, women. According to Henrichs, the *thiasoi* led by Baubo and Kosko may have been maenadic, but the Magnesian inscription does not guarantee this.¹³⁷

The epitaph of a Dionysian priestess from Miletus further attests to the necessity of female bacchantes within the city. Dating to the third or second century BCE, the epitaph honours the woman Alkmeonis and praises the *politides bakchai*, or “citizen bacchae.” The epitaph describes Alkmeonis as having led the *politides bakchai* into the mountains before the entire city.¹³⁸ Unlike the evidence for Thettale at Magnesia, the feminine plural ending employed here indicates that the citizen *bakchai* of Miletus were

¹³⁴ Details are given in *I Mag* 215. See also Parke 1939: 340. Cf. Goff, *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece*, 251.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ For identification on stelae, see Farnell, *Cults* V 152. Cf. Henrichs, “Greek Maenadism from Olympias to Messalina,” 130.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 134.

¹³⁸ Quandt, p. 171., LSAM, 48, with a complete biography. Cf. Nilsson, *The Dionysian Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age*, 6.

women. In the third century BCE, the priestess was even paid for assisting at private sacrifices and initiations.¹³⁹

Alkmeonis of Miletus and the three Magnesian bacchants are the only historical maenads before the Imperial period whose names are known and they represent the lack of evidence for female cult practice. These few epigraphic examples convey the distinctions afforded female bacchants in the Hellenistic period. Through Dionysian cult women were able to organize public events, earn income, receive public honours, and ultimately, to engage in public life. Nor were such distinctions at odds with the traditional ideals of female seclusion championed by Pericles in the Classical period. Rather, these distinctions afforded by Dionysian cult were closely tied to citizenship and were deeply rooted in the activity of the *polis*. The suspicions captured by Euripides of women in Dionysian cult with images of female isolation and filicide and the romanticization of maenads in art and poetry give way to the practical, *politides bakchai*. These women acted on behalf of the *polis*, while simultaneously finding civic responsibility and forging relationships outside of their immediate *oikoi*.

Conclusion

The cult of Dionysos provided Greek women with the opportunity to participate in public displays, dances, occasional travel, and the chance to socialize with other Greek women beyond their immediate neighbourhoods. The respected position of female bacchants is captured in Plutarch's account of the women of Amphissa defending the bacchants of Phokis. Nor was Dionysian cult limited to maidens, as Diodorus Siculus

¹³⁹ Goff, *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece*, 67.

distinguishes the activities of matrons in cult ritual.

Through worshipping the god of liberation and ecstasy, female bacchantes likely sought liberation from the weariness of everyday life and the dictations of men. The cult provided a space for women to socialize, share experiences, and exercise control over ritual and planning public events. Here, women could enter the public sphere without compromising the respectability afforded them by seclusion and at least in the case of the Magnesian women, they could receive public honours. The Thyiades described by Pausanias and Plutarch demonstrate the public spectacles performed by bacchantes through which they achieved acclaim. When the dances, wanderings and processions had ceased, the women of Dionysian cult were thrust back into the restrictions of a patriarchal society and the daily goings-on of the Greek *oikos*. Societal restrictions made the cult of Dionysos a limited pursuit of the liberation which the god represented. However, this pseudo-liberation would be tested in Rome, where the cult of Dionysos would be met with restraints and a ban in 186 BCE.

Chapter 3: Roman Bacchus: Scandal and Apprehension

Introduction

Dionysian mystery cult spread into Rome through Southern Italy and continued into the fourth century CE, after which there is no epigraphic evidence.¹⁴⁰ The Roman reception of the cult of Dionysos was not without modification. The hierarchical nature of Roman society as well as the Roman concept of *religio* (divine obligation) called for a high level of cult organization. This chapter examines the Roman approach to bacchic worship and how these Roman modifications impacted the participation of women in the cult.

“The Identity Question” examines the introduction of Dionysos into Rome and the subsequent syncretic union of traditions native to the area. At Rome, the earliest evidence for Bacchic cult comes from graves of the third century BCE.¹⁴¹ The Etruscans had worshipped a god called Fufluns who had much in common with the Greek Dionysos and was absorbed into the traditional Dionysian *mythos* during the sixth to second centuries BCE.¹⁴² Dionysos also encountered Liber Pater, a divinity local to Southern Italy, with which Dionysos was identified by the early second century BCE.¹⁴³ Rouselle examines fragmentary evidence from Early Roman playwrights and cites Naevius’ *Lycurgus* as his primary example to contend that syncretism had already begun by 186 BCE, as Dionysos and Liber are used interchangeably in the text. As the 186 BCE persecution of the bacchic

¹⁴⁰ Seaford, *Dionysos*, 66.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 60.

¹⁴² Evans, *The God of Ecstasy*, 118. Evans uses Bomati’s analysis of vase paintings as evidence. These artefacts demonstrate the syncretism of Fufluns with several main figures of Dionysian art, as well as with Dionysian traits.

¹⁴³ Robert Rouselle, "Liber-Dionysus in Early Roman Drama." *The Classical Journal* 82, no. 3 (1987): 193.

cult had no effect on the cult of Liber, it appears their syncretic union was ongoing. A comparison between the Greek Dionysos and the Italian Liber demonstrates the simultaneous familiar and foreign aspects of Roman Bacchus, as a Dionysos-like divinity had been native to Italy long before the 186 BCE persecution.

“*Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus, 186 BCE*” examines the ban of the bacchic cult at Rome through Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita*. Livy presents the affair as the Senate’s reaction to a *conspiratio*, as cult members stand accused of forging seals, killing initiates, and partaking in licentious activities.¹⁴⁴ The decrees allowed for investigation into the cult and its members (39.14.8), the persecution of priests and followers (39.18.8-9), and rewards to be given to informants (39.19.4). Livy’s account repeatedly singles out female initiates and condemns the mixing of genders.¹⁴⁵ Livy ultimately condemns as immoral an aspect central to Dionysian cult—its inclusivity.

“Historiographic Analysis” considers the problems presented by Livy’s work. Livy’s notion of a cult attracting increasing numbers while its initiates were being murdered, for example, presents some flawed logic.¹⁴⁶ Evans suggests that Livy’s emphasis on drama and the cult’s criminal nature was to create a narrative that was pleasing in content as well as style.¹⁴⁷ For Rouselle, the hostility expressed by Livy toward the bacchic cult was likely derived from Early Roman playwrights, such as Andronicus, Plautus, Naevius, and Ennius. Rouselle contends that these playwrights had ‘presented a negative model of ecstatic Dionysiac worship and may well have played a

¹⁴⁴ Titus Livius, *Ab Urbe Condita*, trans. Evan T. Sage (London: Heinemann, 1965), 39.9.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 39.14

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 39.9.

¹⁴⁷ Evans, *The God of Ecstasy*, 112.

part in forming public opinion before the persecution began.’¹⁴⁸ Seaford examines the element of choice in bacchic cult, as the cult was open to all elements of society. He asserts that Livy and other Roman critics of Dionysos viewed the nature of Dionysian cult as an organization of individuals of varying class and status was counterproductive to the class structure of the Roman state.¹⁴⁹

“Epigraphic Evidence from Italy and Imperial Greek Lands” studies the reinstitution of bacchic cult under Caesar. About 200 inscriptions from the Imperial Period offer insight into cult management and collectively suggest a stricter hierarchy than the egalitarian gathering of followers presented in *Bacchae*. The longest list comes from the inscription of Agrippinilla, likely found south of Rome at Terre Nova. The inscription includes a long list of cult members as well as titles and functionaries, suggesting a strong hierarchy within the group.¹⁵⁰ An inscription from the *Iobakkhoi* at Athens presents a similar list of functionaries and titles, although for an all-male group. The *Iobakkhoi* inscription also features a list of regulations.¹⁵¹ An inscription from Ephesus lists functionaries which include various individuals from mythology, suggesting an element of theatre to bacchic cult practice.¹⁵² Overall, the epigraphic evidence demonstrates Romanization, as hierarchical Roman society is reflected in cult structure, and the prevalence of male members in positions of authority.

“Reconciling Effeminacy and Roman Masculinity” returns to the mythological figures in the inscription from Ephesus and addresses the reconciliation of dance and

¹⁴⁸ Rouselle, “Liber-Dionysus in Early Roman Drama,” 195.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries*, 51.

¹⁵¹ J. B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007), 125.

¹⁵² BMI, 600; the beginning in Quandt, p. 161, the names p. 266. Cf. Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries*, 61.

theatre in bacchic practice with Roman masculinity. This is achieved through the study of Lucian's second century CE treatise on the merits of dance. He counters Crato's description of dance as 'effeminate' with mythology, citing Homer and Hesiod as evidence that the gods participate in dance. He also discusses mystery cult and the notion that performance in honour of the divine is not to be viewed as effeminate, but rather as an act of piety.¹⁵³ Lucian presents the Roman reconciliation with the 'femininity' of Dionysian cult practice through *religio*, or 'divine obligation.' As an act of piety, dance may be separated from the femininity with which it was often associated in Roman culture.

"Villa of the Mysteries" explores Room 5 of the Pompeian villa and the reading of its frescoes as a depiction of female initiation. While a final, authoritative assessment of these frescoes is lacking, the imagery remains consistent with sources regarding Bacchic ritual. The use of music, dance and ritual meals are all recognizable components of Bacchic celebration and a female initiate remains the focal point of the action. The cycle is completed by a seated matron looking on from Group I, whose presence alludes to the established gender hierarchy within the cult.¹⁵⁴ Regardless of whether the room itself was for a gendered use, the rich depiction of female ritual activity attests to the continued presence of women in bacchic ritual, as well as the hierarchies within the Roman bacchic tradition.

"Ariadne, the Whole-Hearted" examines the mythology surrounding the wife of Dionysos, and her (likely) presence in the Villa of the Mysteries alongside her husband.

¹⁵³ Lucian, *Salutatio*, trans. A.M. Harmon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 5.229.

¹⁵⁴ Katherine Bradway, *Villa of Mysteries: Pompeii Initiation Rites of Women* (San Francisco, CA: C.G. Jung Institute, 1982), 28.

Given her status as a ‘virgin goddess,’ Bradway suggests that Ariadne is representative of the ideal initiate. Because Ariadne was embraced and revived through her association with Dionysos, her presence in the Pompeiian frescoes as well as other artwork may serve a dual purpose. According to Bradway, Ariadne functioned as not only the wife of Dionysos, but represented in ritual context a figure transformed through divine association.¹⁵⁵ It remains an interesting note that as Dionysian cult became increasingly male dominated in the Imperial period, the model for the process of initiation in the Villa of the Mysteries remained a woman.

“End of an Era” considers the increasingly artistic approach to Dionysos. The Orphic association of Dionysos with the Underworld resurfaced in the Imperial period with the introduction of ‘Dionysian baroque’— a series of coffins with Dionysian imagery, exemplified here by Appendix I. Dionysian imagery became popular amongst artists as well as authors; notably, the revels of Dionysos appear notably in the poems of Tibullus and the Imperial Greek novel *Daphnis and Chloe* by Longus. Evans attests that despite the Romanization of Dionysian cult, the influence of the upper classes did not outlast the ‘economic opulence’ of the Imperial period which made them possible.¹⁵⁶

While Dionysos was effectively Romanized, the participation in bacchic cult gave way to an artistic image. In sum, it is shown that the decline in epigraphic evidence of bacchic cult in the Imperial period yielded to artistic representations enjoyed by the privileged classes. As Roman authors and visual artists fed the affinity of the upper classes for Dionysian imagery, Dionysos became a source of enjoyment in the Imperial period, whether in Roman literature, or elegant frescoes like those at Pompeii. In artistic

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 10.

¹⁵⁶ Evans, *The God of Ecstasy*, 127.

renderings Dionysos remained associated with his female retinue, even as their presence in cult practice declined.

The Identity Question

As Roman authority had spread to Southern Italy, the predominantly Greek customs of its inhabitants were absorbed along with the mystery cult of Dionysos.¹⁵⁷ At Rome, the earliest evidence for Bacchic cult comes from graves of the third century BCE.¹⁵⁸ The first mention of Bacchic rites in literature comes from the playwright Plautus, active from about 205 BCE. He alludes in several places to Bacchic practice and had himself lived to see the suppression of the cult in 186 BCE: ‘Now no Bacchic women are playing’ was likely a reference to this event.¹⁵⁹

However, a divinity similar to Dionysos was present in Southern Italy at an earlier date. The Etruscans worshipped a god called Fufluns who had much in common with the Greek Dionysos and was absorbed into the larger Dionysian *mythos* during the sixth to second centuries BCE.¹⁶⁰ Liber Pater, an ancient agricultural deity which had been celebrated especially at Lavinium with annual phallic processions, became associated with Dionysos through syncretism. Both names remained in use, with Liber Pater becoming a popular title of Dionysos in the literary tradition. The identification of Dionysos with Liber Pater in the works of Plautus and Livy suggest that this syncretic

¹⁵⁷ Seaford, *Dionysos*, 58-9

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 60.

¹⁵⁹ Plautus, *Casina*, 918. Cf. Ibid, 59.

¹⁶⁰ Evans, *The God of Ecstasy*, 118. Evans uses Bomati’s analysis of vase paintings as evidence. These artefacts demonstrate the syncretism of Fufluns with several main figures of Dionysian art, as well as with Dionysian traits.

union had evolved by the early second century BCE.¹⁶¹ Whereas Altheim, Rose, and Wissowa present a much earlier date for the syncretic union, asserting that Dionysos and Liber had been identified by 496 BCE.¹⁶²

The controversy surrounding the identification of Liber and Dionysos stems largely from the fact that the 186 BCE persecution of Bacchic cult had no effect on the cult of Liber, which suggests that despite the obvious similarities and allusions made in poetic narrative, the two cults had not yet been reconciled, at least officially. Rousselle provides a compelling solution to this problem in "Liber-Dionysus in Early Roman Drama." He uses the works of Roman playwrights to suggest that whether the two deities had been identified formally in 496 is irrelevant, as syncretism had already begun by 186 BCE. His chief evidence behind this claim is Naevius' early third century BCE play *Lycurgus*, which dramatized the legendary confrontation between Dionysos and Lycurgos and includes a fragment in which Lycurgos' adversary is referred to as Liber.¹⁶³ Following the identification of Liber with Dionysos, the Romans would continue to use Liber Pater interchangeably with Dionysos and Bacchus, including Late Republican and Augustan authors such as Ovid.¹⁶⁴ In Wilburn's "The God of the Vine: A Note on Nomenclature," he states that the Latin preference for the name Bacchus was most prominent in poetry, where references to the Greek literary tradition and metonymy were praised. Wilburn also notes that Livy, Varro, and Vitruvius, writing between the first

¹⁶¹ Rousselle, "Liber-Dionysus in Early Roman Drama," 193.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 194.

¹⁶⁴ Drew Wilburn, "The God of the Vine: A Note on Nomenclature," in *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2000), 14. Wilburn cites *Met.* 4.9-17 as his chief example.

century BCE and the first century CE, used the name Liber almost exclusively.¹⁶⁵ Aside from the cultural capital carried by each respective title, meter likely guided the preference of poets with a firm hand.

Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus, 186 BCE

Evidence for the ban of Bacchic cult in 186 is presented in great detail by Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, written in the late first century BCE. The *Senatus Consultum* collectively refers to the three senatorial decrees made against Bacchic cult activity in Rome following a scandal presented before the Senate in 186 BCE. The decrees allowed for investigation into the cult and its members (39.14.8), the persecution of priests and followers (39.18.8-9), and rewards to be given to informants (39.19.4). Livy describes the cult as having spread 'like the contagion of a pestilence,' from Etruria to Rome. He also refers to the cult activities explored previously in this investigation— chiefly, the mixing of gender and age, and theatrical and musical performance— as tools for nefarious acts. Stating:

When wine had inflamed their minds, and night and the mingling of males with females, youth with age, had destroyed every sentiment of modesty, all varieties of corruption first began to be practised, since each one had at hand the pleasure of answering to that to which his nature was more inclined. There was not one form of vice alone, the promiscuous matings of free men and women, but perjured witnesses, forged seals and wills and evidence, all issued from this same workshop: likewise poisonings and murders of kindred, so that at times not even the bodies were found for burial...This violence was concealed because amid the howling and the crash of drums and cymbals no cry of the sufferers could be heard as the debauchery and murders proceeded.

Livy, trans. Sage *Ab Urbe Condita*, Vol. XI, 39.9

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 15.

The source of Livy's claims is Publius Aebutius, who was horrified when he discovered that his own mother Duronia had sought to 'corrupt' him through initiation into the Bacchic rites, claiming that she had vowed to initiate him as a gratuitous offering for his recovery from illness. The initiation process is said to have involved ten days of continence, followed by a banquet and ritual purification.¹⁶⁶ It was Publius' lover, the courtesan and freedwoman Hispala Faecenia, who informed him of the debauchery performed in Bacchic ritual, which she had experienced while still a slave tending to her mistress who was herself an initiate. She claimed that for the past two years no one over the age of twenty had been initiated and that the howls, song, and cymbals of the gatherings would drown out the suffering of the initiate, who fell victim to the priests upon arrival.¹⁶⁷ Publius' dilemma soon became a public one, when on the advice of his aunt, he reported the criminal nature of the cult to the consul Postumius. Hispala later confessed to the consul that she had been an initiate in the rites alongside her mistress in her youth. She went on to explain how the cult, once open only to women, began to admit men under the priestess Paculla Annia, who wished to initiate her own sons, and increased the frequency of ritual from three days a year to five days per month.¹⁶⁸ Hispala went on the report that:

From the time that the rites were performed in common, men mingling with women and the freedom of darkness added, no form of crime, no sort of wrong-doing, was left untried. There were more lustful practices among men with one another than among women. If any of them were disinclined to endure abuse or reluctant to commit crime, they were sacrificed as victims. To consider nothing wrong...was the highest form of religious devotion among them.

Livy, trans. Sage, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 39.14

¹⁶⁶ Titus Livius, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 243.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 247.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 253.

When the consul Postumius brought this issue before the Senate, the Senate authorized him to investigate the cult and its membership. He held an informal meeting during which he claimed that the conspirators numbered in the thousands, and that female initiates were chiefly responsible for the debauchery.¹⁶⁹ The consul presented this affair as corruptive to the Roman youths and an affront to Roman values. He further claimed that a great many more crimes would surely be uncovered in association with this cult. The *Senatus Consultum* was then decreed, rewards were offered for information pertaining to the cult and its members, and those named to authorities were deemed fugitives. Livy claims that more than seven thousand individuals were involved in the conspiracy, and that many more were killed than imprisoned.¹⁷⁰ The consuls were commanded to destroy ‘all forms of Bacchic worship’ in Rome and throughout Italy. So as not to incite the god’s wrath, altars and images which had been consecrated in the ancient past were exempt from this destruction.¹⁷¹ Future performances of Bacchic rites would be regarded as highly political and a civic concern, rather than a private affair:

If any person considered such worship to be ordained by tradition or to be necessary, and believed that he could not omit it without sin and atonement, he was to make a declaration before the city praetor, and the latter would consult the senate. If permission were granted to him, at a meeting where not fewer than one hundred were in attendance, he should offer the sacrifice, provided that not more than five people should take part in the rite, and that there should be no common purse of master of sacrifices or priest.

Livy, trans. Sage, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 39.19

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 261.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 267-9.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 271. It was also decreed that no Bacchanalia would be held in future in Rome or Italy.

Historiographic Analysis

The *Senatus Consultum* is also featured summarily in a letter addressed to the federated state of Bruttium and generally agrees with Livy's assessment of events.¹⁷² However, Livy's account has several flaws. First, Livy's description of the Senate's reaction to the affair suggests that the senators had been previously unaware of the cult. As previously discussed, Dionysos was clearly recognized in Rome by the early third century BCE.¹⁷³ Given the allusions by Roman playwrights to bacchic cult activity we may deduce that audiences were to some extent aware of Dionysian cult and were thereby able to recognize the references being made. In addition, the desire for thousands of Roman citizens to join a cult which involved the torture and torment of its initiates is incredibly difficult to justify. For Seaford, Livy's claim that many initiates were murdered and their bodies never recovered was likely derived from the terror of an 'imagined death' imposed during initiation, especially since this imagined death took the form of a sacrifice in *Ab Urbe Condita*, as the death of the Dionysiac initiate likely did as well.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, the claim that so great an organization of Roman citizens was operating in Rome, secreted from any authorities willing to charge wrong-doers appears an immense exaggeration. As the concern with morality and fear for the corruption of the state was a common theme of Republican literature and oratory, it is likely that Livy exaggerated the magnitude of the scandal for the sake of literary theme. As Evans addresses in *God of Ecstasy*, Livy often

¹⁷² CIL. I. 196, cf. Titus Livius, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 272. Sage notes in his commentary that the letter is linguistically divergent from Livy's account, which suggests that neither source was entirely reliant on the other.

¹⁷³ Seaford, *Dionysos*, 60.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

embellished his history to create a narrative that was pleasing in content as well as style.¹⁷⁵

In “Liber-Dionysus in Early Roman Drama,” Rousselle contends that the answer to this controversy lies within the fragmentary evidence of Roman plays produced with bacchic themes during the Republican period. He asserts that the plays of Livius Andronicus, Plautus, Naevius, and Ennius ‘presented a negative model of ecstatic Dionysiac worship and may well have played a part in forming public opinion before the persecution began.’¹⁷⁶ For example, in the play *Lycurgus*, written by Gnaeus Naevius in the early to mid third century BCE, the opponents of the god find their fields burned, and their properties aflame.¹⁷⁷ Rousselle also cites Plautus’ *Cistellaria*, which may have introduced Roman audiences to key visual elements of bacchic cult; namely, that the cult met during the night, where wine-filled bacchantes might take part in sexual activities.¹⁷⁸ According to Rousselle, Plautus makes several allusions to ‘bacchic fury’ which he uses synonymously with ‘violent and destructive behaviour’ in *Vidularia*, *Bacchides*, *Aulularia*, and *Amphitruo*. He also references the intense sexual appetites of female bacchantes, which frightened their male counterparts. Plautus also proffers the description of bacchic women as “hominem sorbent sanguinem,” or, ‘they drink human blood.’¹⁷⁹

Just as Pentheus’ scepticism regarding the activities of female bacchantes in *Bacchae* had served to signify a sense of anxiety around the newly introduced mysteries

¹⁷⁵ Evans, *The God of Ecstasy*, 112.

¹⁷⁶ Rousselle, “Liber-Dionysus in Early Roman Drama,” 195.

¹⁷⁷ Naev., Trag. F 22, 48, 52 Ribbeck, cf. Rousselle, “Liber-Dionysus in Early Roman Drama,” 197.

¹⁷⁸ Plaut. Cist. 156-59, cf. *ibid*, 196. Rousselle also notes that ‘nocturnal ravishment’ is also mentioned in Aulul. 36, although at a vigil of Ceres.

¹⁷⁹ For quotes on female sexuality, Plaut. *Bacch.* 53-56, 371-73. For blood consumption, see Plaut. *Bacch.* 371-73, cf. *Ibid*, 197.

in Euripides' Thebes, Plautus' accusations of sexual activity and even blood drinking on part of the female bacchantes are in no way evidence for the licentious and criminal acts presented in Livy's account of the *senatus consultum*. Rather, the Roman anxiety toward the cult of Dionysos was likely due to the nature of the cult which consisted of individuals from diverse social and economic backgrounds. The cult's gender-mixing and inclusive membership was inherently contradictory to the highly gendered and hierarchical nature of Roman society. Rouselle argues that Roman drama dramatized the already circulating Roman anxieties toward the bacchic cult and that the public reception of popular drama promoted hostility which allowed for the *senatus consultum* of 186 BCE.¹⁸⁰

For Seaford, the element of choice was a principle cause of concern for Livy as well as other Roman critics of Dionysian cult. The cult itself functioned with a clear hierarchy, an element of secrecy, and the individual choice to be initiated. Because membership to the Greek cult was not dependent on locality, family, patronage, tradition or authority, it rested outside of the control of the Roman social hierarchy. It is for this reason that Livy describes the group in *Ab Urbe Condita* as *alterum...populum* (a second society), and as a *coniuratio* (a conspiracy).¹⁸¹ Seaford asserts that the nature of Dionysian cult as an organization of individuals of varying class and status was counterproductive to the hierarchic structure of the Roman state.¹⁸² According to Livy, Roman authorities condemned the mixing of males and females within the cult. In the roughly 200 inscriptions left from the third century BCE to the third century CE, local cults tended to have mixed genders, although they were more commonly all-male than all-

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 197.

¹⁸¹ Seaford, *Dionysos*, 60.

¹⁸² Ibid.

female and were predominantly led by male authorities.¹⁸³ This constitutes a major departure from Euripides' characterization of Dionysian cult as a band of frenzied women led by an 'effeminate' god.

Epigraphic Evidence from Italy and Imperial Greek Lands

In 49 BCE, Gaius Julius Caesar seized power in Rome. During his rule as dictator, he would pass many reforms sought after by the lower-classes, including the repeal of the ban on the Bacchanalia.¹⁸⁴ The epigraphic evidence from this period denotes a Romanization of the Greek cult, as cult regulations are clearly defined and female participation declined. The hierarchic nature of Roman society came to permeate the cult, and Dionysos gained popularity among the Roman upper classes.¹⁸⁵

An assortment of about 200 inscriptions from the Imperial period offer insight into cult management, and collectively suggest a stricter hierarchy than the egalitarian gathering of followers presented in *Bacchae*. The Theban women in *Bacchae* who take to the mountains to partake in Dionysian worship quickly come into conflict with civic authority; this conflict is decidedly different from the Roman inscriptions, which demonstrate male predominance, hierarchic structure, and a strong concern for financial and disciplinary detail. The inscriptions indicate that the organization of local cults were pervaded by Roman societal structure and often relied on the financial support of a

¹⁸³ Ibid, 66-7.

¹⁸⁴ Evans, *God of Ecstasy*, 125.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 125-7. In his chapter titled "Rome," Evans explores the necessity for a romanized Dionysos through Roman myth and understanding of femininity and sexuality.

powerful *familia*.¹⁸⁶ While the Greek *orgia* tended to have a single leader such as Thetalle of Magnesia (discussed in the previous chapter), the new mysteries maintained an elaborate hierarchy, with members and administrators taking on roles of varying necessity.¹⁸⁷

The longest list of cult members comes from the inscription of Agrippinilla, likely found south of Rome at Terre Nova. Engraved on a base which once supported a statue of Agrippinilla, the monument is dated to the second century CE and was erected by the *mystae* whose names are listed on its three sides.¹⁸⁸ Agrippinilla was a noble woman, married to M. Gavius Squilla Gallicanus; a consul in 150 CE and a proconsul in Asia circa 165. Nilsson suggests that it was through her time spent in Asia that she had learnt of the Dionysian mysteries and subsequently brought them back to Rome. As her *mystae* (initiates) consist of family members as high ranking functionaries along with other members of her household, the Agrippinilla inscription represents a familial association.¹⁸⁹ Nilsson asserts that since the titles of the functionaries and members recur in the Dionysian cults of Asia Minor, this inscription falls into the pattern of inscriptions from that region which demonstrate an ‘exuberant hierarchy.’¹⁹⁰ The bacchants were assigned various titles based on their status within the group and their respective role. On

¹⁸⁶ Seaford, *Dionysos*, 66-7. For a further linguistic assessment of these inscriptions, see Seaford’s chapter on ‘Mystery Cult’, and Nilsson’s chapter “The Greek Lands in the Roman Age,” from *The Dionysiac Mysteries*.

¹⁸⁷ Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries*, 51.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 46-7, 51. For the expanded list of names, see Nilsson 52-3.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. Slaves and freedmen account for the lower ranking functionaries in the inscription.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

the Agrippillina inscription, those whom silence was imposed upon during and after the ceremonies were referred to as “the silent ones.”¹⁹¹

A key epigraphic source for the mysteries of Imperial Greece comes from Athens. The Iobakkhoi are known to have gathered in a fairly large hall (11x18m) as their meeting place and a column near the altar is adorned with a lengthy inscription of the association’s by-laws.¹⁹² The masculine ending attributed to Iobakkhoi and the list of functionaries demonstrate that the Iobakkhoi was an entirely male association. According to the inscription, the group met monthly, as well as during all festivals of Bacchus. Clearly there was some concern for safety and regulation, as the by-laws forbid song and public disturbance and provide a guide by which to handle physical confrontation between members.¹⁹³ This concern for regulation and order in Imperial inscriptions was not a concern in the epigraphic evidence from Hellenistic Greece.

A mutilated inscription from Ephesus is inferred to be a reference to theatrical performances as part of bacchic ritual. The clearly marked heading ‘Mysteries of the God Dionysos’ is followed by a list of functionaries as well as mythological figures such as nymphs, kouretes, and deities, similar to the Athenian inscription of the Iobakkhoi.¹⁹⁴ What distinguishes the dances at Ephesus is the inclusion of νέου Διονύσου, or ‘new Dionysos,’ as functionary. The title is in reference to Emperor Hadrian, which Nilsson attributed to the common practice of merging imperial cult with local mysteries in Asia

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 57.

¹⁹² SIG³ 1109 trans. Meyer 1987: 96-9. Cf. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 124.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 125. For a further analysis of Iobakkhoi functionaries and their titles see Nilsson (1975), 58.

¹⁹⁴ BMI, 600; the beginning in Quandt, p. 161, the names p. 266. Cf. Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries*, 61.

Minor. The Senate is also mentioned in this portion of the inscription.¹⁹⁵ While the incorporation of imperial cult with mysteries was a common practice in Asia Minor, Roman emperors frequently identified themselves with the wine god. As the Greek Dionysos had long been associated with the ‘release’ wine offers from what Euripides had called ‘the evils of the day,’¹⁹⁶ Dionysian freedom took on a much more militaristic sense in the Roman world, as conquerors were seen to have liberated the conquered. This militaristic approach to Dionysos demonstrates a further ideological shift from a cult championing liberation in the realm of gender and sexuality, to militarism— a pursuit from which women were wholly excluded.¹⁹⁷

Reconciling Effeminacy and Roman Masculinity

It is likely that the mythological figures listed alongside the functionaries in the Iobakkhoi and Ephesian inscriptions were guises assumed during public performance in the manner described by Lucian, a Roman citizen of Samosata who wrote during the second century CE. In Lucian’s lengthy treatise on the merits of dance as a cultural phenomenon, he counters the accusations of Crato that public dances are a lowly and ‘effeminate activity’— an attitude surely magnified in Bacchic cult by the traditional association of the god with effeminacy.¹⁹⁸ In response, Lucian discusses at length the history of dance, citing Homer and Hesiod among other literary sources to establish the long held cultural significance of public dancing. He further states that all ancient mystery

¹⁹⁵ BMI, 600, p. 266, cf. *ibid.* Note that the final word/s of this list is corrupted.

¹⁹⁶ Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays*, 1.328-330.

¹⁹⁷ Evans, *The God of Ecstasy*, 118, 125.

¹⁹⁸ Lucian, “Saltatio,” 5.4.211-213.

cults involved an element of dance, and that those who speak of the mysteries in passing ‘are typically said to “dance them out.”’¹⁹⁹ After describing at length the use of masks, dancing, and singing exhibited by performers in tragedy, Lucian states that the common charge against the dance, that men imitate women, would be a common charge against tragedy and comedy as well, as female roles often outnumber the male.²⁰⁰ Lucian justified the dance performances which Crato called ‘effeminate’ as acts of devotion in honour of the gods, who had often danced in myth. As patriarchal Roman culture undoubtedly favoured masculine over feminine behaviour, the integration of bacchic worship into Roman society required some degree of reconciliation. This was provided by Lucian who presents the bacchic dance as a pious activity and a justified aspect of *religio*.

In his description of ‘Dionysiac and Bacchic rites,’ Lucian refers to the most commonly performed dances as the Cordax, Sicinnis, and the Emmeleia, which he claims were invented by the Satyrs in the god’s retinue, who had named the dances after themselves.²⁰¹ The names of these dances are featured once more in Lucian’s description of the integration of lyric and dance with theatrical performance.

The themes of tragedy and the dance are common to both, and there is no difference between those of the one and those of the other, except that the themes of the dance are more varied and more un-hackneyed, and they contain countless vicissitudes.

Lucian, *Saltatio*, 5.243

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 5.4.229.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 5.4.241.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 5.4.235. Harmon notes in his translation that this notion of the Satyrs naming the dances after themselves appears to be Lucian’s own idea, although the Sicinnis was said to have been named for its Cretan or barbarian inventor. He also points out that these dances were common in comedy, satyr plays, and tragedy respectively. (4.239)

As Lucian identifies the dances performed in tragedy and comedy with the dances performed in Bacchic ritual, the figures from mythology listed in the inscriptions of the Iobakkhoi of Athens and Agrippinilla in Terre Nova are clearly guises assumed in public performance. The religious dances characterized by Lucian are discussed by Philostratus as well, as he commented on the fervent dancing in Athens which included subjects from epic poems, Horae, nymphs, and bacchants.²⁰² The masked nature of the god and his relationship to theatrical performance would have certainly lent an air of legitimacy to cultic performances.

Through the integration of mythic history and the influence of hierarchal Roman society, bacchic revel became effectively Romanized. The contractual nature of Roman *religio* called for functionaries, hierarchy, and the by-laws outlined by the Athenian Iobakkhoi. This Romanization is further exhibited by the decreased number of female functionaries in epigraphic evidence, particularly as high ranking functionaries. As the Roman household and larger governing body were predicated on the concept of the *paterfamilias*, the male dominance in Imperial bacchic is not surprising.

Villa of the Mysteries

A controversial scene of female initiation is presented in the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii. Built in the first half of the second century BCE, the 40,000 square foot villa is located just beyond the gates of Pompeii.²⁰³ The Dionysiac frieze in Room 5 of the villa dates to the mid first century BCE and presents a lively scene of what appears to be the

²⁰² Philostratus and Eusebius, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, trans. F. C. Conybeare, 4.21.

²⁰³ Jarrett A. Lobell, "Saving the Villa of the Mysteries," *Archaeology Magazine*, February 10, 2014, accessed January 2, 2017, <http://www.archaeology.org/issues/124-1403/features/1813-pompeii-saving-the-villa-of-the-mysteries>.

initiatory process of a young woman into the cult of Dionysos, while the god himself looks on from the lap of his lover Ariadne on an adjacent wall. The two lateral wings appear to summarize aspects of ritual at least partly on a mythological level. It is the interpretation of these images and that divides modern scholarship.²⁰⁴

The fresco itself adorns the walls of the most opulent room of the villa, which had presumably been used to entertain on special occasions. Some scholars suggest that the room functioned along with its smaller, adjoining room as the apartment of the *materfamilias*, or *domina* (the women of the house).²⁰⁵ The relative inaccessibility of these inner rooms further suggests that they were reserved for specific members of the household, or for guests of sufficient status and relationship to the inhabitants as to grant them access into an otherwise private and domestic space. Despite the prominence of women in the fresco cycle, Longfellow notes that due to the patriarchal organization of the Roman family around the *paterfamilias*, it is unlikely that such a richly decorated space would have been reserved for the occasional use of women alone.²⁰⁶

The frescoes clearly depict a transformative process of the main female figure. As Bradway highlights in *Villa of Mysteries: Pompeii Initiation Rites of Women*, the general Greek word for “rite” stems from the root meaning, “grow up.”²⁰⁷ According to one common interpretation outlined by Gazda in her assessment of Room 5, the megalographic mural depicts images of female ritual activity interspersed with glimpses

²⁰⁴ Karl Lehmann, “Ignorance and Search in the Villa of the Mysteries,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 52 (1962): 62.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 1-2. For more on the function of this section, see Sauron and Longfellow.

²⁰⁶ Longfellow, “A Gendered Space? Location and Function of Room 5,” in *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse*, 33.

²⁰⁷ Bradway, *Villa of Mysteries: Pompeii Initiation Rites of Women*, 1.

into the mythological world of Dionysos.²⁰⁸ Examining Room 5 clockwise from Group I, the ritual portion of the scene begins with sacred readings, followed by the preparation of a ritual meal (Group B). The woman depicted in Group I, before the youthful, naked figure shown reading a (perhaps ritual) text, is entirely covered with heavy drapery. According to Bradway, this likely signifies the initiate shielding herself from the outside world, as she prepares to enter into a hidden, secretive realm.²⁰⁹ In Group A, a seated figure crowned with myrtle likely represents the initiate at a later stage of the process, with her crown being a symbol of renewal.²¹⁰ In Group C, a female figure appears to have wandered into the divine world and is startled, either by the presence of Dionysos and Ariadne in Group D, or by the revelation of a phallus in Group E. Group C also features a woman giving suck to a female goat. Bradway suggests that this image represents the female initiate on an instinctual level, as well as her acceptance of the ritual process.²¹¹ Because bacchantes were frequently represented by goats in antiquity, Bradway suggests that the focal shift from human to animal subjects parallels many myths and rites “in which a lessening of human consciousness and regression to a preconscious animal state become a requisite to rebirth and regeneration.”²¹²

The interpretation of this mural in the context of the initiatory process rests with Bacchus, reclining in Group D alongside a female companion, most likely Ariadne. He assumes a relaxed position, with a sandal fallen from his foot and a *thyrsos* in his lap, all

²⁰⁸ Elaine K. Gazda, "Introduction: Ancient and Modern Contexts of the Bacchic Murals in the Villa of the Mysteries," in *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse*, 1. Gazda's interpretation is based on that of D. Comparetti (1921).

²⁰⁹ Bradway, *Villa of Mysteries: Pompeii Initiation Rites of Women*, 13.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid, 20.

²¹² Ibid.

of which suggests that he had participated in some degree with the lively scenes depicted on surrounding panels.²¹³ Beyond the reclining Dionysos, Group E depicts a kneeling woman, revealing a *liknon* containing a phallus to a winged female figure, visibly repulsed by the offering. Group F depicts a flagellating young initiate before a dancing maenad. According to Lehmann in "Ignorance and Search in the Villa of the Mysteries," the dancing maenad in Group F alludes to both Bacchic revel and the blissful state after initiation.²¹⁴ Finally, a woman flanked by cupids is dressing her hair in a bridal style in Groups G and H, while the cycle is completed by a seated matron looking on from Group I. Her presence also alludes to the established gender hierarchy within the cult.²¹⁵

While a final, authoritative assessment of these frescoes may never be uncovered, the imagery remains consistent with sources regarding Bacchic ritual. The use of music, dance and ritual meals are all recognizable components of Bacchic celebration. The supernatural images including a fearsome mask in Group D as well as the winged *daimon* and cowering initiate in Group F allude to the *katabasis*, or point of no return. This descent is echoed by the male protagonist in Achilles Tatius' novel *Leucippe and Clitophon*, who states: 'I felt as though I was in a mystery-cult: I had no idea who the man was, nor what I had done to deserve his blows.'²¹⁶ Lehmann uses literary evidence as well as a similar depiction of a winged figure from Hermoupolis to identify the winged figure

²¹³ Molly Swetnam-Burland, "Bacchus/Liber in Pompeii: A Religious Context for the Villa of the Mysteries Frieze," in *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse*, 59.

²¹⁴ Lehmann, "Ignorance and Search in the Villa of the Mysteries," 62.

²¹⁵ Bradway, *Villa of Mysteries: Pompeii Initiation Rites of Women*, 28. Bradway argues that the presence of this female figure reflects the need for initiated women to direct attention to the initiation process.

²¹⁶ Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, trans. Tim Whitmarsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5.23.23-5.

as *'Αγνοια*, or ignorance. This reading justifies the contrast of the darkened wings (representing obscurity) with the otherwise light and lively scenes.²¹⁷ The initiate, once afraid of the unknown, rejoices in knowledge in the final scenes, liberated from fear. Whether the room itself was intended for a gendered use, or simply a demonstration of reverence for Bacchus, the rich depiction of female ritual activity in the central room of this Pompeiian villa attests to the continued presence of women in bacchic ritual, as well as the hierarchies within the Roman bacchic tradition.

Ariadne, the Whole-Hearted

When Ariadne's own mythology is applied to the Pompeiian fresco, her presence alongside Dionysos communicates a narrative of initiation and inclusion, and the transformation of the individual into the group. After aiding the hero Theseus to destroy the minotaur in exchange for their departure from Crete and subsequent marriage, Theseus soon abandoned Ariadne on the island of Naxos, where she was met by impassioned Dionysos. The two were married and Ariadne was made immortal and placed in the heavens as the constellation Corona.²¹⁸

According to Bradway, the popularity of Ariadne in myth stems from her status as a virgin goddess. Virgin goddesses were known to the Greeks as women belonging to themselves alone, rather than understood in terms of their relationships with male consorts.²¹⁹ Ariadne's mythological encounters with Theseus and Dionysos demonstrate

²¹⁷ Lehmann, "Ignorance and Search in the Villa of the Mysteries," 63.

²¹⁸ See: Homer, *Odyssey*, 11. 320, Hesiod, *Theogony*, 947, Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 4. 61. 5, etc. According to Diodorus Siculus, Theseus did not betray his word, and Dionysos abducted the maiden due to her excessive beauty.

²¹⁹ Bradway, *Villa of Mysteries: Pompeii Initiation Rites of Women*, 9.

her agency as well as her own individual power.²²⁰ As Bradway notes, according to conflicting narratives Ariadne was either killed by Artemis for her desertion of Dionysos, or she had hanged herself for her own misfortune. Regardless, when Dionysos embraced Ariadne he both consummated their marriage and revived her.²²¹ In terms of ritual, this narrative further justifies Ariadne's presence in the Pompeiian fresco, as she serves not only as the wife of Dionysos, but as a figure transformed.²²² Their marriage serves to represent the deification of an 'otherwise undistinguished earthly woman' and Ariadne as the ideal initiate.²²³

Exploring this notion further, Ariadne represents the potential for an elevated soul, not unlike Psyche for her union with Cupid. She was abandoned, experienced a *katabasis*, either at her own hands, or by Artemis, and was revived by the passion of Dionysos. Because of the parallels between Ariadne's mythology and the generic pattern of initiation, her inclusion in cult performance and artwork is better understood. So too might her presence among functionaries in the inscriptions of the Iobakkhoi and Mysteries of Ephesus have more meaning, as initiates took on the guise of a woman revived and elevated through union with Dionysos. As Dionysian cult became increasingly male dominated in the Imperial period, the model for the process of initiation in the Villa of the Mysteries remained a woman.

²²⁰ See, for example, Catullus 64.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Bradway cites Hesiod as a contrasting source, as his brief description of Ariadne restricts her characterization to her status as the wife of Dionysos. See Hesiod, *Theogony*, 31. 'Golden-haired Dionysus made auburn Ariadne, Minos' daughter, his fertile wife, and the son of Kronos made her immortal and ageless for him.'

²²³ Bradway, *Villa of Mysteries: Pompeii Initiation Rites of Women*, 10.

End of an Era

As representations of Dionysos in Roman art continued, the Orphic influence once again reared its head. The Orphic association of Dionysos with death (discussed in the previous chapter) led to the production of a series of elaborately carved stone coffins, displaying intricate scenes of bacchic revel in a style now referred to as “Dionysian baroque.”²²⁴ Twice born, the liberation offered by Dionysos became associated with the promise of an afterlife and Dionysos likewise became lord of the underworld, having descended into and returned from it.²²⁵ Appendix I is a prime example of this Dionysian style. The lid which features a reclining Silenus is a modern addition. Around the base, wingless cupids represent the child for whom this coffin was created. Young maenads strike tambourines, while boys bear the *thrysos*. Dionysian baroque and the detailed frescoes of the Villa of the Mysteries exemplify the popularity of Dionysian imagery among the upper classes, and their popularity coincides with the decline in evidence of cult practice.²²⁶ Dionysos and his wife Ariadne had become an artistic statement in the Imperial period, and would be again in the works of Renaissance painters. The revels of Dionysos also became popular in literature and appear notably in the poems of Tibullus and the Imperial Greek novel *Daphnis and Chloe* by Longus. In the *Epic of Dionysos*, written by Nonnos in the 5th century CE, Nonnos painted the god in a militaristic light, as he modelled the god’s invasion of India after Alexander the Conqueror.²²⁷ Despite the Romanization of Dionysian cult, Evans contends that the influence of the upper classes

²²⁴ Kerényi, p. 381. Cf. Evans, *The God of Ecstasy*, 126.

²²⁵ Nilsson, *The Dionysian Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age*, 40-41.

²²⁶ Evans, *The God of Ecstasy*, 126-7. For the decline of epigraphic evidence, see Seaford, *Dionysos*, 66.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, 127.

did not outlast the ‘economic opulence’ of the Imperial period which made them possible.²²⁸

Conclusion

The cult of Dionysos underwent many changes in the Roman world, as Roman culture effectively Romanized the god of madness. The Greek Dionysos was identified with Liber in Southern Italy and thence joined an ancient, local pattern of belief. Due the contractual nature of Roman *religio*, cult organization and regulations became more defined. Following *Senatus Consultum* of 186 BCE, the cult was reinstated under Julius Caesar and epigraphic evidence from the Imperial period demonstrates Romanization through regulation. The hierarchic structure of Roman society seeped into the ancient revels, and titles were given to functionaries. Men came to dominate the high ranking positions within the cult, while female participation declined.

Given the strong apprehension of the Romans toward what they deemed ‘feminine behaviour,’ the attitudes which had established Dionysos as a champion of women to the Greeks were problematic for their Roman counterparts. The lively performances and dances of traditional bacchic cult were thereby evaluated and integrated into Roman respectability. Lucian’s treatise on dance performances suggests that in the name of *religio*, such activities otherwise deemed effeminate and therefore divergent were considered pious in ritual.

Finally, as the ban on bacchic cult was lifted under Caesar, the upper classes sought Dionysos as an artistic statement. The Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii serves this

²²⁸ Ibid.

artistic function and demonstrates the continued association of Dionysos with female cult participation. The artistic fascination with Dionysos also produced ‘Dionysian baroque,’ exemplified here by a coffin from the British Museum (Appendix I). As Dionysos was represented in art and literature of the Imperial period for his many functions as liberator, chthonic deity, and god of the grape, Dionysos was for many a source of amusement. Roman art and literature continued to present Dionysian imagery, and in this way Dionysos remained associated with his female retinue, even as their presence in cult practice declined.

Conclusion

The emphasis placed on women and femininity in Dionysian mythology and Euripides' *Bacchae* demonstrates the centrality of gender to Dionysian divinity and presents Dionysos as the defender of women and femininity. As women in *Bacchae* derived strength from their association with Dionysos, so too did historic bacchantes enjoy privileges within the Greek cult. Hellenistic stela inscriptions from Magnesia commemorated civically appointed women who led Dionysian ritual on behalf of the city. They were able to exercise control over ritual, plan public events, and receive public honours. An epitaph at Miletus similarly honoured the Dionysian cult leader Alkmeonis as leader of the 'citizen bacchae.' Participation in Dionysian cult offered women the opportunity to socialize with individuals beyond their respective neighbourhoods and to engage in public affairs.

Public performances were a common feature of Dionysian worship and offered the opportunity for public recognition. The exclusion of women from the performing arts was compensated for by public participation in ritual dance. The Athenian *Thyiades* had acquired great renown for their dance performances, as well as the opportunity for biennial travel. Through Dionysian worship women were able to participate in civic affairs without compromising the respectability afforded them by seclusion. Dionysian cult involved women of all ages and afforded women the opportunity to socialize and celebrate femininity through the celebration of Dionysos.

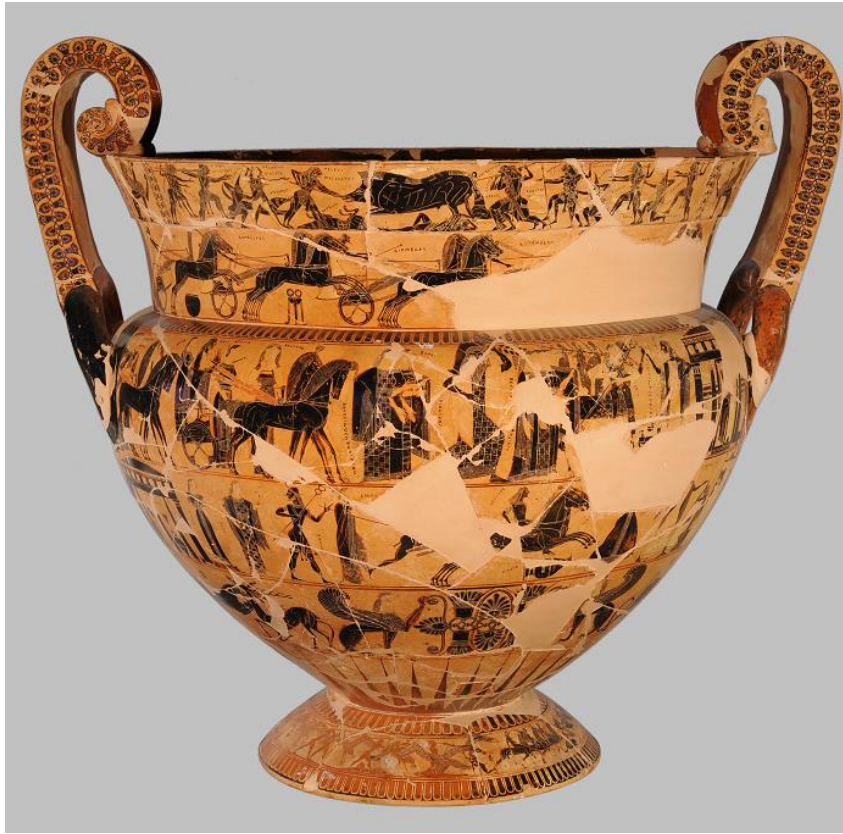
In the Imperial period, the bacchic cult at Rome met with a ban in 186 BCE. Livy placed the blame for the cult's alleged criminal activity on essential practices of the Greek Dionysian cult— wine-drinking, and the mixing of genders. In hierarchic Roman society, the egalitarian nature of the Greek cult could not be sustained. The hierarchic nature of

Roman society was transcribed into epigraphic evidence through the detailed lists of functionaries and cult regulations. Due to the central principle of the Roman *paterfamilias*, males dominated in lists of functionaries, particularly in positions of authority. The all-male *Iobakkhoi* at Athens served as a prime example. Epigraphic evidence of the bacchic cult ended in the third century CE as the cult of Dionysos passed largely into the realm of visual and literary arts. However, even as the number of female bacchantes in cult declined Dionysos remained associated with his female retinue in the frescoes of the Villa of the Mysteries and in Dionysian baroque. Maenadic imagery outlasted the practices of Dionysian cult worship and remained a testament to ‘the revels that we(re) shared in the days that are gone.’²²⁹

²²⁹ Lucian, *Dionysus*, trans. A.M. Harmon, 14.54-55.

Appendix A

Large black figure krater of c. 570 BCE, depicting the wedding of Peleus and Thetis.



Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana. *François Vase*. National Museum of Archaeology, Florence. In *Florence Inferno*. April 26, 2014. Accessed August 5, 2016. <http://www.florenceinferno.com/the-francois-vase/>.

Appendix B

Red-Figure Cup by Douris Painter, c. 480 B.C., terracotta.



Douris Painter. *Red-Figure Cup Showing the Death of Pentheus (exterior) and a Maenad (interior)*. 2016. Ancient Greek, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth. In *Kimbell Art Museum*. 2016. Accessed July 21, 2016. <https://www.kimbellart.org/collection-object/red-figure-cup-showing-death-pentheus-exterior-and-maenad-interior>.

Appendix C

Roman period copy of 4th century BCE Greek original, c. 100 CE. Marble relief, 1.21x 0.19 x0.99 metres. A cortege of two satyrs and a female follower in Dionysian procession.



A maenad and two satyrs in Dionysiac procession. May 24, 2016. Townley Collection, British Museum, London. (Author)

Appendix D

Red-figure wine-mixing bowl (calyx-krater), 5th century, Niobid Painter.



Niobid Painter. *Dramatising the Supernatural*. May 24, 2016. Altemura GR 1856. 12-13. 1 (Vase E467), British Museum, London. (Author)

Appendix E

Athenian red-figure drinking cup attributed to the Penelope Painter, c. 440 BCE, probably representing the Aiora (“swinging”) ritual in honour of Erigone. The satyr symbolizes the Dionysian context of the larger Anthesteria festival.



Attributed to the Penelope Painter. *Red-figure Drinking Cup c.440 BCE*. Antiquity Collection, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, ins. no. F 2589. In: Mikalson, Jon D. *Ancient Greek Religion*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005, Fig. III.3.

Appendix F

Maenad Stamnos depicting the Lenaia Festival.



Dinos Painter. 'Maenad' Stamnos. Museo Nazionale Archeologico, Naples. In: *Classical Art Research Centre*, Photographed by: M. Tiverios. Accessed January 17, 2017. <http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/images/pottery/painters/keypieces/tiverios/32-p186-medium.jpg>.

Appendix G

Backstage at a satyr play. Attic red-figure volute krater by the Pronomos Painter. Ceramic; c.410 BCE.



Pronomos Painter. *Backstage at a Satyr Play*. Archaeological Museum, Naples. In: Neer, Richard T. *Greek Art and Archaeology: A New History, c. 2500-c. 150 BCE*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012, 299, Fig. 12.5.

Appendix H

Plan of Room 5 of the Villa of the Mysteries showing the arrangement of the mural cycle around the room.

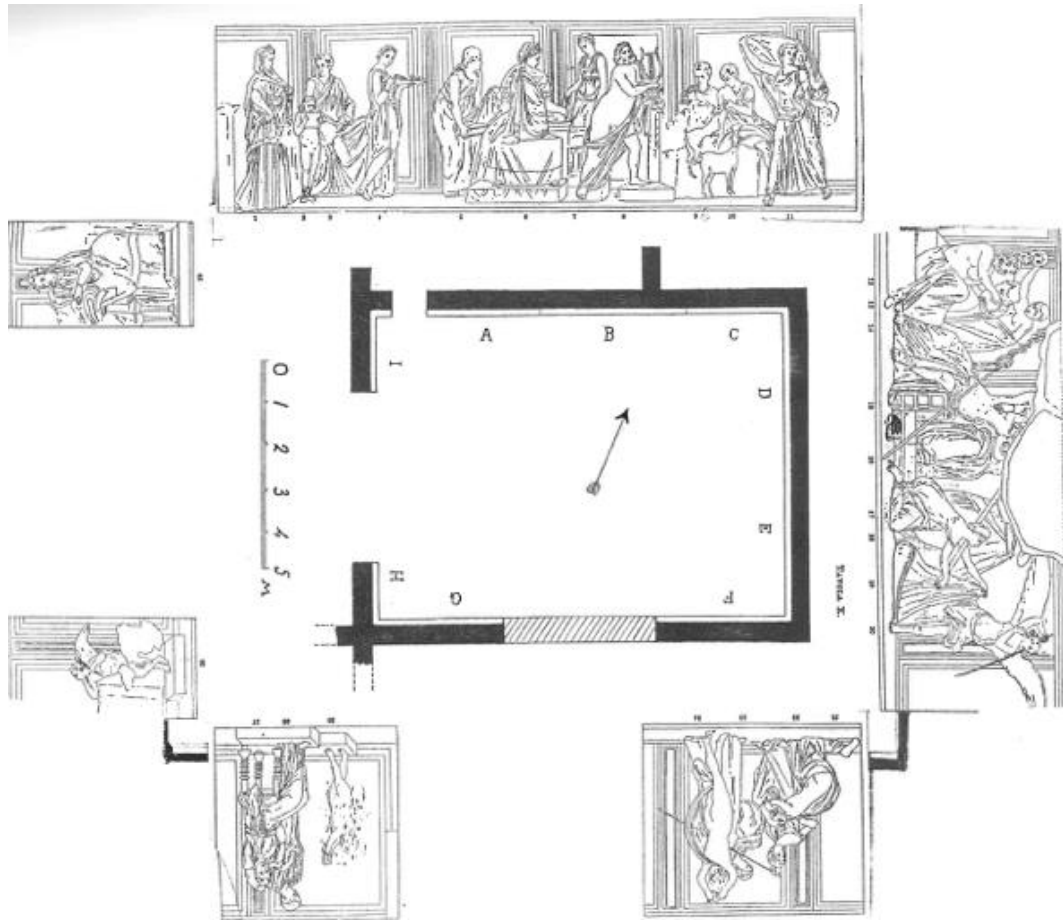


Fig. 1.4, "Introduction: Ancient and Modern Contexts of the Bacchic Murals in the Villa of Mysteries," Elaine K. Gazda. In: Gazda, Elaine K., ed. *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse*; Ann Arbor, MI: Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, 2000, 3.

Appendix I

Child's coffin decorated with bacchic procession. Marble, probably carved at Rome about 220-250 CE.



Child's sarcophagus decorated with a procession of the wine-god Bacchus and his followers. March 24, 2016. GR 1996.3-1.1, British Museum, London. (Author)

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Apollodorus. *The Library of Greek Mythology*. Translated by Robin Hard. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Aristotle. *Aristotle: Poetics*. Translated by Gerald Frank Else. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *De Natura Deorum*. Translated by H. Rackham. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.

Douris Painter. *Red-Figure Cup Showing the Death of Pentheus (exterior) and a Maenad (interior)*. 2016. Ancient Greek, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth. In *Kimbell Art Museum*. 2016. Accessed July 21, 2016. <https://www.kimbellart.org/collection-object/red-figure-cup-showing-death-pentheus-exterior-and-maenad-interior>.

Euripides. *Bacchae and Other Plays*. Translated by Peter Burian and Alan Shapiro. Vol. IV: The Complete Euripides. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Herodotus. *The Histories*. Translated by Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Homer. *The Homeric Hymns*. Translated by Michael Crude. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Homer. *The Iliad*. Translated by Robert Fagles. Edited by Bernard Knox. New York: Viking, 1990.

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles. Edited by Bernard Knox. New York: Viking, 1996.

Livy. *Ab Urbe Condita*. Vol. XI. Book 39. Translated by Evan T. Sage. Edited by T. E. Page, E. Capps, W. H. D. Rouse. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937.

Lucian. "Saltatio," in *Lucian Book V*. Translated by A. M. Harmon. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962.

Nonnos. *Dionysiaca*. Translated by W. H. D. Rose. Vol. 14-15. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Pausanias. *Guide to Greece*. Translated by Peter Levi. Edited by Betty Radice. Vol. I: Central Greece. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.

- Pausanias. *Guide to Greece*. Translated by Peter Levi. Edited by Betty Radice. Vol. 2: Southern Greece. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.
- Philostratus, F. C. Conybeare, and Eusebius. 1912. *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Plutarch. *Plutarch's Moralia*. Vol. 3. Translated by Frank Cole Babbitt. London: W. Heinemann, 1927.
- Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana. *François Vase*. National Museum of Archaeology, Florence. In *Florence Inferno*. April 26, 2014. Accessed August 5, 2016. <http://www.florenceinferno.com/the-francois-vase/>.
- Tatius, Achilles. *Leucippe and Clitophon*. Translated by Tim Whitmarsh. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Secondary Sources

- Bradway, Katherine. *Villa of Mysteries: Pompeii Initiation Rites of Women*. San Francisco, CA: C.G. Jung Institute, 1982.
- Bremmer, Jan N. "Greek Maenadism Reconsidered." *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik* 55 (1984): 267-86. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20184041>.
- Burkert, Walter. *Greek Religion*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Carpenter, Thomas H., and Christopher A. Faraone, eds. *Masks of Dionysus*. Myth and Poetics. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Detienne, Marcel. *Dionysos at Large*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Detienne, Marcel. *Dionysos Slain*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979.
- Dodds, E.R., *Euripides' Bacchae: Greek Text and Commentary*, 2nd edition. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1960.
- Euripides, and Richard Seaford. *Euripides' Bacchae: With an Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1996.
- Evans, Arthur. *The God of Ecstasy: Sex-roles and the Madness of Dionysos*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

- Gazda, Elaine K. "Introduction: Ancient and Modern Contexts of the Bacchic Murals in the Villa of the Mysteries," in *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse*. Edited by Elaine K. Gazda. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2000.
- Gilhus, Ingvild Sælid. *Laughing Gods, Weeping Virgins: Laughter in the History of Religion*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Goff, Barbara E. *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Graf, Fritz, and Sarah Iles Johnston. *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2007.
- Guía, Miriam. "Redefining Dionysos in Athens from the Written Sources: The Lenaia, Iacchos and Attic Women," in A. Bernabé et al., *Redefining Dionysos*, de Gruyter, 100-119. 2013. Accessed August 14, 2016. <https://www.academia.edu/907351/>
- Harrison, Jane Ellen. *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*. New York: Meridian Books, 1955.
- Henrichs, Albert. "Greek Maenadism from Olympias to Messalina." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 82 (1978): 121-60.
- Hornblower, Simon, and Antony Spawforth, eds. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Kraemer, Ross S. "Ecstasy and Possession: The Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysus." *The Harvard Theological Review* 72, no. 1/2 (1979): 55-80. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1509675>.
- Lacey, W.K. *The Family in Classical Greece*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.
- Lehmann, Karl. "Ignorance and Search in the Villa of the Mysteries." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 52 (1962): 62-68.
- Lobell, Jarrett A. "Saving the Villa of the Mysteries." *Archaeology Magazine*, February 10, 2014. Accessed January 2, 2017. <http://www.archaeology.org/issues/124-1403/features/1813-pompeii-saving-the-villa-of-the-mysteries>.
- Longfellow, Brenda. "A Gendered Space? Location and Function of Room 5," in *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse*. Edited by Elaine K. Gazda. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2000.
- "Lupercalia." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. November 08, 2007. Accessed July 20, 2016. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lupercalia>.

- McGinty, Park. *Interpretation and Dionysos: Method in the Study of a God*. Vol. 16. Religion and Reason. Hague: Mouton, 1978.
- McNally, Sheila. "The Maenad in Early Greek Art." *Arethusa* 11 (1978): 101-35. Accessed July 10, 2016. http://www.samorini.it/doc1/alt_aut/lr/mcnally.pdf.
- Mikalson, Jon D. *Ancient Greek Religion*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005.
- Neer, Richard T. *Greek Art and Archaeology: A New History, c. 2500-c. 150 BCE*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012.
- Nilsson, Martin P. *The Dionysian Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age*. Lund: Skanska Centraltryckeriet, 1957.
- Otto, Walter F. *Dionysus, Myth and Cult*. Translated by Robert B. Palmer. Dunquin Series. Dallas: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Price, Simon. *Religions of the Ancient Greeks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Rousselle, Robert. "Liber-Dionysus in Early Roman Drama." *The Classical Journal* 82, no. 3 (1987): 193-98. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3297899>.
- Rives, James B. *Religion in the Roman Empire*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007.
- Seaford, Richard. *Dionysos. Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Seaford, Richard. *Euripides' Bacchae: With an Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1996.
- Sealey, Raphael. *Women and Law in Classical Greece*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- Segal, Charles. *Dionysiac Poetics and Euripides' Bacchae*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982.
- Swetnam-Burland, Molly. "Bacchus/Liber in Pompeii: A Religious Context for the Villa of the Mysteries Frieze," in *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse*. Edited by Elaine K. Gazda. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2000.
- Tetlow, Elisabeth Meier. *Women, Crime, and Punishment in Ancient Law and Society*. Vol. 2. New York: Continuum, 2005.

Wilburn, Drew, Brenda Longfellow, et al. *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse*. Edited by Elaine K. Gazda. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2000.

Wilburn, Drew. "The God of the Vine: A Note on Nomenclature," in *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse*. Edited by Elaine K. Gazda. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2000.

Zaidman, Louise Bruit and Pauline Schmitt Pantel. *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*. Translated by Paul Cartledge. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.